NEA Today
WASHINGTON, D.C. DECEMBER 1990
A NEWSPAPER FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
VOL. 9
NO. 4

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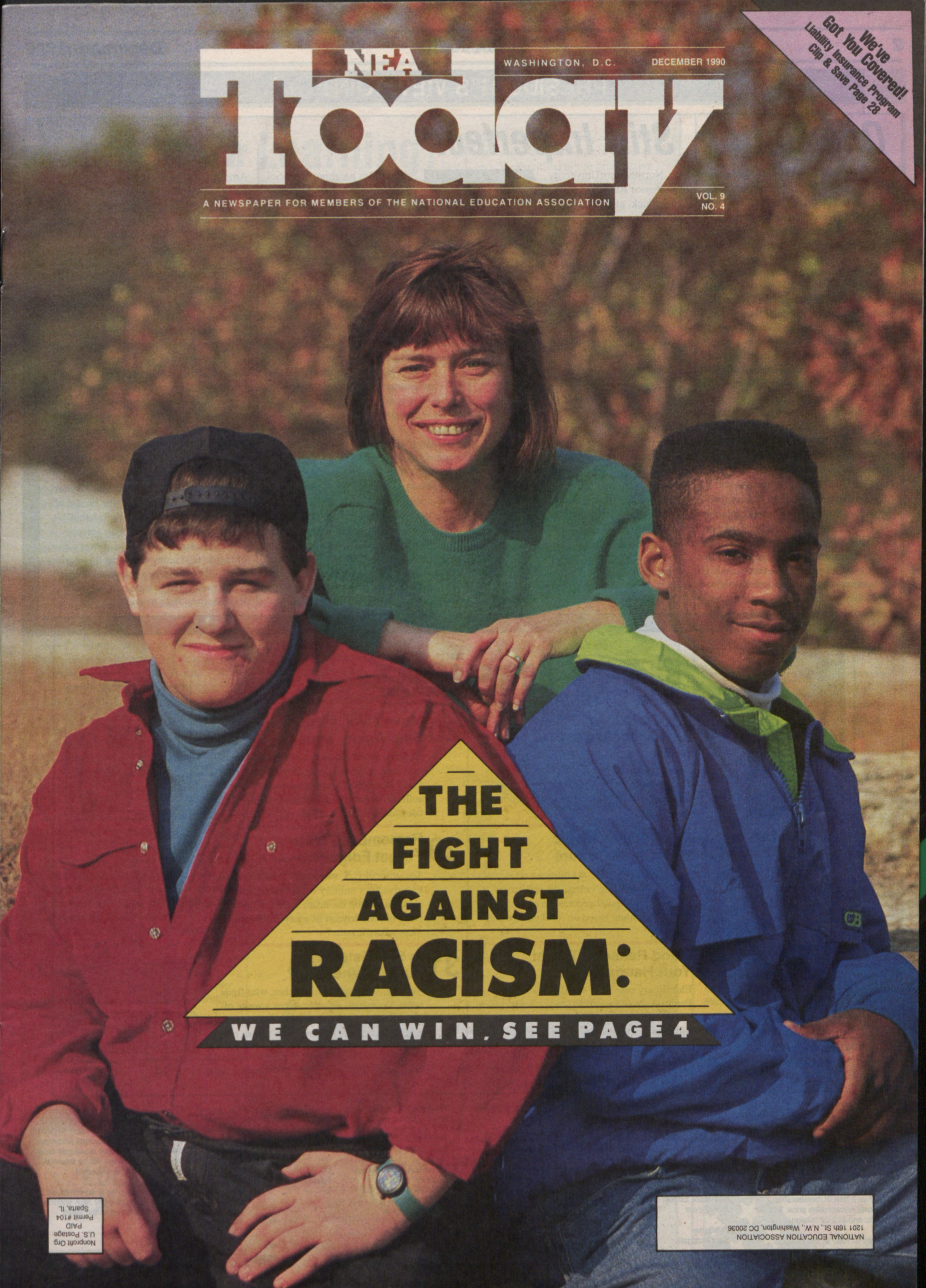

THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM:

WE CAN WIN, SEE PAGE 4

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PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

One Nation, Still Imperfect

Late last month, a federal grand jury in Tulsa, Oklahoma, indicted six members of a skinhead gang for a year-long series of assaults on Arabs, Blacks, Hispanics, and Jews.

Such crimes of hatred enrage and sadden us. But then we dismiss them, as "only aberrations." We comfort ourselves with the thought that prejudice tatters only the fringes of American society.

We can find that comfort no longer. For we have received jolting news: 47 percent of U.S. secondary school students surveyed recently say that if they came upon a racial attack in progress, they'd join the attackers—or at least do nothing to stop the attack, because they'd assume it was justified.

This is perhaps the most appalling of the attitudes uncovered in a nationwide poll conducted by Louis Harris and Associates.

In just three years, crimes motivated by racism and anti-Semitism have increased by more than 150 percent. And our youngsters have contributed to this rise: over 30 percent of American high schoolers say they have committed—or are "likely to commit"—racist acts.

Northeastern University professor Richard Lapchick, after studying the Harris survey, concludes that "our children have learned to hate."

Lapchick is on target. And the evidence is everywhere.

Racist graffiti appear on school lockers. The swastika, spray-painted in Day-Glo colors, greets worshippers approaching their synagogue. Campuses become racial battlegrounds. Ethnic groups trade ethnic slurs.

NEA President
Keith Geiger

All these signals teach us anew that bigotry is a light sleeper, easily aroused. We are learning that prejudice seldom rests, and that malice is an insomniac. Above all, we are learning once again the harsh truth that "all that is required for the triumph of evil is that the good do nothing."

Some of us—though still too few—are acting on this understanding. Members of the clergy remind their congregations that hatred violates every theology. Concerned citizens convene forums designed to bring harmony out of the discord that divides neighbors. School employees drive home the message that bigotry mocks the most sacred American ideals. (See related story, page 4.)

All of this is laudable. All of this is not enough.

The greatest social challenge we face—the greatest educational challenge we face—is to rekindle the civil rights movement. We must do whatever needs to be done to ensure that the civil rights crusade becomes a living reality that sparks passion today—not a 1960s relic that elicits nostalgia for yesterday.

It falls to us to accept the challenge of teaching every student about the battles waged, the blood spilled, the lives lost in the quest to give meaning to the phrase "and justice for all."

We don't need to feed our students propaganda. We need only tell them the truth.

And we need to show them, with our actions, that when we speak of "America the beautiful," we are speaking of a multi-ethnic, multi-racial, religiously diverse mosaic.

We must tell every student how far America has come. And we must tell every student how far America has to go.

We must enlist the support of parents. We must ask for help from the clergy, from the business community, from social service agencies. We must expose racism in all its guises. We must oppose elected leaders who veto civil rights bills.

We must, especially as we approach the holiday season—the season when millions of Americans pause to reflect on their values and their beliefs—find a way to breathe new life into the teachings at the heart of our national heritage.

And as the new year nears, we also ought to reflect on the life of the man whose principles we will again honor on January 15, 1991. We ought to remember that he was taken early from us for the simple reason that he asked us to take to heart the words of Abraham Lincoln, "with malice toward none."

Martin Luther King, Jr., died 22 years ago. And still his dream—the dream of "one nation, under God, indivisible"—remains an aspiration, not an achievement. Our students, each and every one of them, must understand that this aspiration will become an achievement only when they learn to hate hatred—only *if* they learn to hate hatred.

Inside

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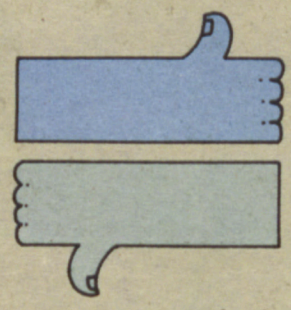
31 Is Self-Esteem Just Another Fad?
You bet, says an Illinois teacher, who finds today's spotlight on self-esteem a waste of time and money. No way, responds a Michigan teacher, who says students won't learn much without it.



On the cover: Trumbull (Connecticut) High School teacher Mary Curtiss and students Matt Shrauger (left) and Ray Smith. Photograph by Michael Duffy.

NEA Today
December 1990
VOL. 9, NO. 4

NEA TODAY is mailed to all NEA members. Annual subscription price: $2.13 (included in membership dues and available only as a part of membership). Institutional subscription price: $15.00 domestic and $22.00 foreign.

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NEA TODAY (ISSN 0734-7219) is published 9 times a year, monthly October-December, February-May and biweekly in September by the National Education Association, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Telephone: 202/822-7207.

Unsolicited feature stories and news items are invited, but NEA TODAY can make no advance commitment to publish any manuscript. Manuscripts accompanied by self-addressed envelopes bearing sufficient postage will be returned within four months if rejected.

Although advertising is screened, advertisement does not imply NEA endorsement of the product or the views expressed.

NATIONAL NEWS

What Is He Learning?

These days, everybody from the President to the parents wants to know. The question is, how do we find out?

It's 1995. One of your students is preparing a portfolio of her work to get a grade in your class. She's also taking SATs to get into college and a national exam of her practical, workplace skills to get a summer job.

Next week, she'll be taking a federally sponsored, standardized test to show politicians how well students in your state are doing. When she's done, she'll take a districtwide test to determine if your school's doing well enough to get more money.

Sound far-fetched? Not really. Policymakers are now debating proposals that would establish all the accountability measures noted above—and more.

Call it Murphy's Accountability Law: As education reform progresses, the demand for numerical results accelerates geometrically.

Got it? If you're still a bit confused, here's a brief guide to what's happening in the field of student assessment.

► **Most Promising**—The adoption of tests that are "performance-based"—that is, tests that allow students to prove what they know by doing it—may be the way of the future.

Connecticut is one state piloting the use of performance-based tests in math and science. Some typical test questions: What mouthwash is the best at killing germs? Is there lead in your drinking water?

Connecticut Education Association President Mark Waxenberg and other CEA members were involved in the development of the new test, which Waxenberg says "does exactly what we want it to. It uncovers holes in the curriculum and assesses individual student strengths and deficiencies."

The problem: Test results are being used politically as the sole criterion for comparing school districts.

► **Hottest New Trend**—In a word, portfolios. These collections of work allow students to show what they've learned over the course of the year. Portfolio assessments display a broader spectrum of student skills than standardized tests.

Vermont Education Association members are now piloting a new statewide assessment system that includes the use of portfolios.

► **Most Politically Volatile**—This coming June, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) will release, for the first time ever, state-by-state comparisons of eighth grade math scores.

Governors are sure to pounce on the data, which could be used to justify increases or cuts in funding, or even lead to the adoption of mandatory curriculums.

► **Least Creative**—Some education officials are instituting or calling for statewide, standardized tests based on the New York regents exam model. These exams, which often drive curriculums, have been imposed in states including Maryland, North Carolina, and Georgia—often with very restrictive results for teachers.

► **Most Politically Difficult**—Last year, the nation's governors agreed on six ambitious national goals for education. Under these goals, by the year 2000, all children should start school ready to learn, the U.S. should rank first worldwide in math and science, and students should demonstrate competency in challenging subject matter.

The toughest part: how to measure whether we as a nation have met those goals. NEA is working with the 14-member National Education Goals Panel to help find an answer.

► **Most Provocative**—A report released by the National Center on Education and the Economy recommends a new educational performance standard to be met by all students when they reach 16. This standard—a "certificate of initial mastery"—would certify to prospective employers that students are competent to function on the job.

This proposal makes critical connections between education and the economy, school and work. Its emphasis on helping all students reach basic competency levels is one reason it deserves further consideration.

► **Shortest Step in the Right Direction**—The changes made in the SAT last month—less emphasis on multiple-choice questions, greater emphasis on reading comprehension, and an optional written essay—are positive, but don't go far enough.

The College Board has yet to deal significantly with charges of bias against females and minorities and with concerns that the tests don't accurately predict students' ability to do well in college.

So how will all this end? There'll be more to assess. Stay tuned.

—Stefanie Weiss

LOOKING AHEAD

► **"Advancing the National Education Goals" is the theme of two NEA spring conferences—the first on technology, March 8-10, San Francisco; the second on restructuring, April 19-21, Pittsburgh.**

► **NEA, along with the National Association for Science, Technology, and Society, will cosponsor the sixth Technological Literacy Conference, Feb. 1-3 in Washington, D.C.**

► **Celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, Monday, January 21.**

Elections '90—

The Good...

The 1990 mid-term elections produced what NEA President Keith Geiger says may be "the most pro-education Congress in 20 years." Key education advocates—among them, Paul Simon in Illinois, Tom Harkin in Iowa, Claiborne Pell in Rhode Island, Daniel Akaka in Hawaii, and Mark Hatfield in Oregon—were returned to the Senate.

In Minnesota, meanwhile, university professor and education activist Paul Wellstone—an NEA-endorsed long shot—won a Senate seat. And in the critical Texas and Florida gubernatorial races, education was a key issue—and key victor.

Feared tax limitation proposals were soundly defeated in Nebraska, Colorado, Utah, and Massachusetts. Nebraskans took out insurance by also approving a measure that protects the integrity of the school reform package adopted by the state's legislature last year.

And voters in Oregon handed school "choice" proponents a big defeat when they said no to tuition tax credits and a statewide open enrollment program.

The Bad...

But the electoral sun didn't shine everywhere. Association-backed candidates for governor lost critical races in California, Ohio, and Michigan.

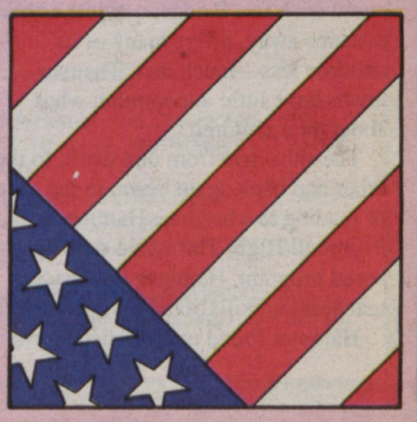
A majority of Oregon's voters approved a measure that will reduce property taxes and hurt education.

And, in Arizona, voters passed up a chance to shore up the state's commitment to education and increase education funding.

...And the Ugly

There are few words to express Association disgust at the tactics used by incumbent U.S. Senator Jesse Helms and Gov. Guy Hunt against their opponents Harvey Gantt in North Carolina and Paul Hubbert in Alabama.

Helms and Hunt appealed to racism, sexism, and homophobia. And they won.



COVER STORY

TEARING DOW

Racism is back—but teachers are tackling it head-on. Here's one way they're waking kids up to what they have in common.

Racism is back. Maybe in the '70s it slept, but in the '80s it stirred, and in the '90s it's awake, and gnawing at our young. It's spreading downwards: from the white college kids who attacked African-American classmates in a dispute over the 1986 World Series to the high schools and junior highs of 1990.

Spreading inward, too, from the fringes—the kids who believe they have nothing going for them but their white ancestors—it's infecting the casual banter of youngsters who are perfectly whole, except for a lack of empathy.

A startling 57 percent of teenagers say they've seen a racially motivated attack, according to a Harris poll of almost 2,000 high school students. Some 47 percent of the Black kids say they themselves have been the victims of episodes of bias.

Fortunately, the spread of racism can be slowed, stopped—even, with national commitment, reversed. School employees can take a long step in that direction, because one solution to the problem is learning.

Mary Curtiss teaches an elective called Literature of Peace and Protest at Trumbull (Connecticut) High School. Like colleagues across the continent, she thinks it's important for our country's future that kids not grow up to hate or fear those who are different: "Too many of us are different now for that."

So Mary Curtiss took her kids from Trumbull to inner-city Bridgeport. Later, the class they visited there came to Trumbull. In either direction, it's quite a journey.

Trumbull is as comfortable and pleasant a place to grow up in as any parent could wish for. Bridgeport, just a short distance away, offers many of its children less—much less. The two towns have little in common; what about their children?

The short trip from one world to the other and back again began in the mind of reading teacher Jane Hammer in Trumbull High. Through a state-sponsored program, Hammer also teaches teachers the skills of reducing prejudice.

Hammer found two English teachers of acknowledged excellence—Mary Curtiss at Trumbull and Celeste Markle (on leave this year) at Bridgeport's Harding High. Both had been recognized in 1988 as among the state's top teachers.

Curtiss and Markle liked the idea of getting their students together. Along with Hammer, they began discussing plans. Each class studied apartheid in South Africa. Then each student wrote an autobiography and a description of what the other kids and their school would probably be like.

During the weeks of preparation, someone came to see Mary Curtiss after school one day. "I heard you're taking your class to Harding High," said Trumbull junior Ray "Tank" Smith.

Smith had transferred from Harding to Trumbull—and Markle had been his English teacher. Maybe, he said, he could let the kids from Trumbull know what to expect when they got to Harding. Before long, Curtiss' class asked Smith if he'd be willing to go to Harding with them.

Finally, one afternoon last winter, as current Trumbull senior Monica Jacoby wrote afterwards, "A group of 12 rich, snobby students from the posh area of Trumbull went to visit an English class at Harding High School in Bridgeport, praying for their safety and hoping not to be shot or to be the victim of a drug pusher.

"A class of 16 or so students in Harding High awaited their arrival," Jacoby continued. "They were nervous and convinced of the Trumbull students' perfection and snotty attitudes."

When Smith got off the bus, the Harding kids relaxed. And when the Trumbull kids saw how warmly he was greeted, they started to relax, too.

The students drew names and exchanged autobiographies. Then each pair introduced each other to the whole group, mentioning something they had in common or something each liked about the other.

"When I got to know the people there, I realized you can't make decisions about places unless you see them first."

Altogether, the visit lasted less than two hours. But, as the students said afterward, that was long enough to change them, in small ways and large.

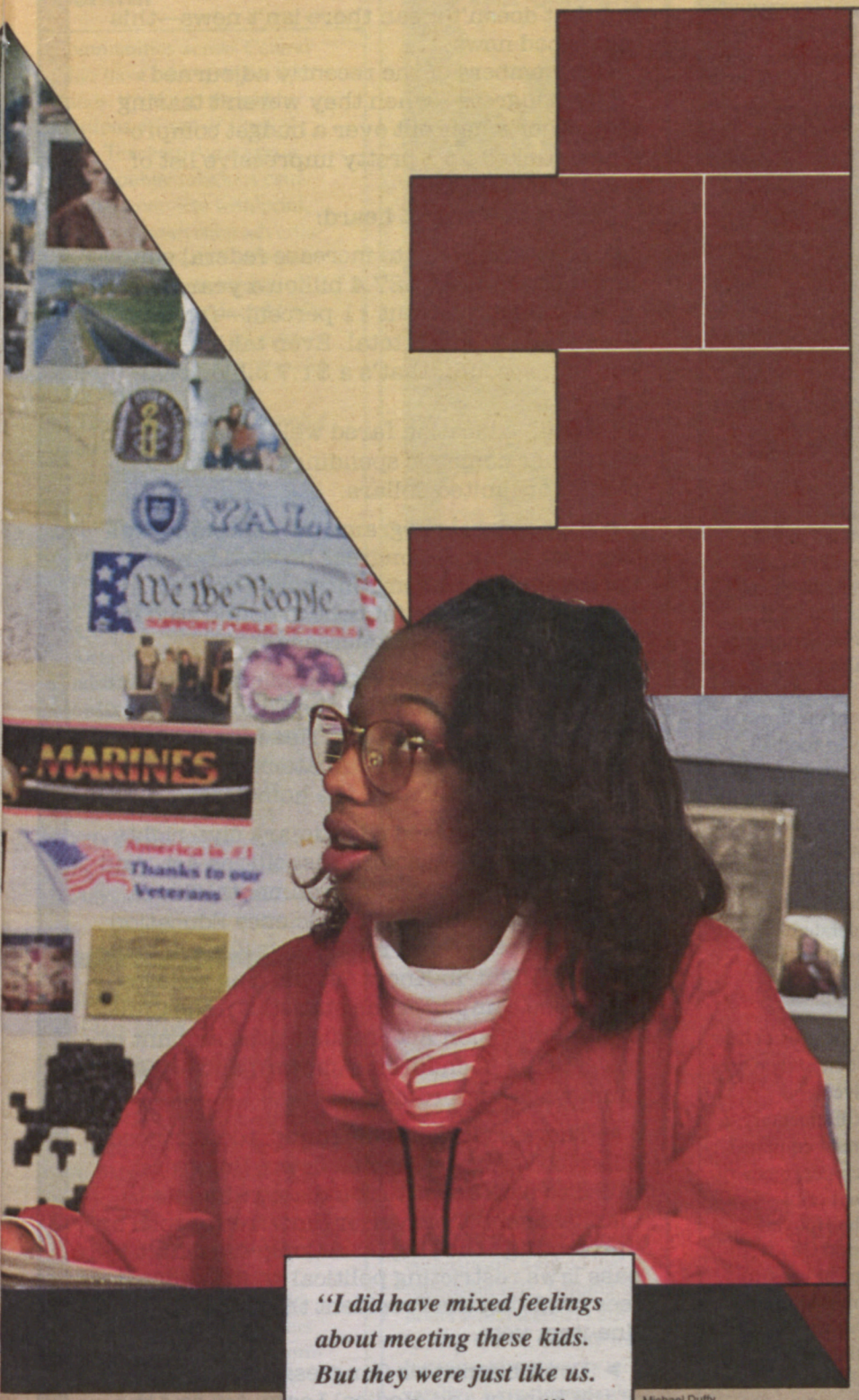
► "Before I arrived, I felt a little nervous about the school's condition and the attitude of the students," admitted Matt Shrauger, now a senior at Trumbull. "When I arrived and got to know the people there, I realized how wrong I was and how you can't make decisions about places unless you see them first. I also found out how alike Marcus and I were."

► "By actually going to the school," said Rob Frederick (now a freshman at Duke University), "I hoped to find out for myself what Harding was like, rather than base my judgments on stereotypes. Harding surprised me. The halls were clean, the school seemed to be under control, and the students were similar to those in our class."

► "The darkness and filth I had

COVER STORY

VN THE WALLS



Michael Duffy

"I did have mixed feelings about meeting these kids. But they were just like us. In fact, they were us!"

imagined remained imaginings," said Lisa Goldstein (currently attending Brandeis University). "This was a place of learning, where kids with somewhat harsher surroundings struggled to finish high school and hopefully start different lives for themselves."

► "Our trip to Harding High proved how stereotypical society could be," says Evan Karp, now at Boston University. "There were spotless hallways, new lockers, small classes, no one hanging around, and most of all, down-to-earth kids."

"I really learned a lot about myself," continues Karp. "I never considered myself a racist, but I had mixed feelings about meeting these kids. But they were just like us. In fact, they *were* us! They shared the same hopes and aspirations and had the exact same fears and anxieties. They just lived in a different place.

"Through programs like this, we can break down the wall between us the way the Berlin Wall came down."

A couple of weeks later, the Harding High class came to Trumbull. Already friends, they went to class with the Trumbull kids.

"My reactions to Trumbull High are very different from what I had expected," Harding student Trach Gordon wrote later.

"I didn't think the school would be so big. I also thought that the students would look at us strangely, but I was very shocked to see that they didn't. The students here are so nice and friendly."

Later, some of the kids exchanged letters. "We ran into some of the Harding kids in the mall, and we talked for a while," says Karp.

And that was that. Or was it? "We've got 4 million people in Boston," Karp notes. "There are a lot of strong differences among us. It's easier to handle that after going to Harding, because I learned we can't let appearances stop us from knowing people."

The kids in Mary Curtiss' class were few. From the beginning, they weren't eaten up by racism, by fear and hatred of the different. Otherwise they wouldn't have chosen that elective, certainly wouldn't have taken their courage in their hands for a voyage 15 miles into the unknown.

Even so, what Curtiss and Hammer and Markle did—to get those kids to look into each other's eyes and acknowledge their shared humanity—wasn't easy. Yet it was possible, and—reflected in thousands of settings, in hundreds of forms— it's what will hold our country together through growth and change.

"With a little effort and an open mind," sums up Trumbull senior Monica Jacoby, "people can learn that different people are the same—we're all human."

—Jane Power

Trumbull (Connecticut) High School teacher Mary Curtiss and Ebony Club President Shandra Johnson discuss issues confronting the club. Curtiss is the group's co-adviser.

"My reactions to Trumbull High are very different from what I had expected. I didn't think it would be so big. I thought the students would look at us strangely—I was shocked to see that they didn't. The students here are nice and friendly."

Reading Against Racism

Black Rage. Price Cobbs and William Grier. Basic Books, 1980.

Crisis in Black and White. Charles Silberman. Random House, 1964.

Eyes on the Prize. Juan Williams. Viking, 1987.

Kaffir Boy. Mark Mathabane. Macmillan, 1986.

Prejudice and Your Child. Kenneth Clark. Wesleyan (Middletown, Conn.), 1986.

Pygmalion in the Classroom. Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson. Irvington, 1986.

Stokely Carmichael: The Story of Black Power. Jacqueline Johnson. Silver Burdett Press, 1990. (One of nine volumes in ***The History of the Civil Rights Movement*** series.)

From the NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06515:

Cooperative Grouping for Interactive Learning: Students, Teachers, and Administrators. Lawrence Lyman and Harvey C. Foyle. 1842-7-00-F. $10.95.

Cooperative Learning: Student Teams. Robert E. Slavin, Johns Hopkins University. Second edition. 1074-4-00-F. $3.95.

Problem Solving/Decision Making for Social and Academic Success: A School-Based Approach. Maurice J. Elias and Steven Tobias. 3007-9-00-F. $11.95.

Student Team Learning. Robert E. Slavin, Johns Hopkins University. Second edition. 1836-2-00-F. $9.95.

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Educators for Social Responsibility, 23 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Don't Remediate: *ACCELERATE*

With a new project called Accelerated Schools, students' self-esteem and test scores soar. And so does teacher professionalism.

Around the nation at 54 elementary schools, at-risk students are learning and thriving on an enriched, problem-solving, hands-on curriculum usually reserved for gifted and talented students.

Instead of remedial rote work—"drill and kill," as one teacher has described it—students are challenged to analyze concepts and solve real-world problems.

It's all part of the Accelerated Schools Project, started three years ago by Stanford University Professor Henry Levin to bring at-risk students to grade level by the end of sixth grade.

"Our test scores, which were in the 25th percentile, really had to come up," explains Valerie Curb, a fourth grade teacher at Hollibrook Elementary School in Spring Branch, Texas. "But we didn't want kids to get a watered-down curriculum or to feel negatively about themselves."

So Curb and her colleagues looked to the Accelerated Schools Project for help. They were impressed with the project's three basic principles:

► All schools are united around a single purpose—helping students succeed.

► All schools build on the strengths of the school and its community.

► All schools allow teachers and students to make decisions and check results.

Fourth grade teacher Camila Schneider from Daniel Webster Elementary in San Francisco testifies to the last principle.

"There's no ready-made curriculum," she says. "For me, the important thing is that it makes us—teachers—identify barriers to student success.

"And the project's success depends on our commitment and willingness to accept individual responsibility," Schneider continues. "We create the vision that works in our own schools."

At Daniel Webster, a student-centered instructional strategy was what worked.

"All learning is now active and based on inquiry and problem-solving techniques," Schneider notes. "We use a lot of cooperative learning and peer- and cross-age tutoring. We take a whole-language approach based on children's experiences and offer lots of language development activities in all subject areas."

Each Project school is governed by teacher-led committees, which make curriculum decisions and promote professional development. At Daniel Webster, for example, all teachers become principal-for-a-day once a semester. They visit all classes while the real principal takes over the teacher's class.

Texas's Valerie Curb used her new-found freedom in the Accelerated Schools Project to develop a new way of organizing classes. For the first time, she's teaching fourth grade to the same students she had in third grade last year. If parents agree, she hopes to have them again for fifth grade. The continuity helps achievement, she says, noting "we're like a little family."

Other teachers choose their own teaching materials, selecting lots of visual and manipulative materials over textbooks. Plus, Project teachers tend to emphasize dramatization, role-playing, and writing in all subjects to improve language and critical thinking skills.

To help serve their communities, many Accelerated Schools also feature extended day sessions. At Hollibrook, community volunteers help students with arts projects and with homework till five. Senior citizens from a local retirement home give piano lessons, and high school student mentors take younger students to football games and Halloween parties.

Although it's still early in the game, Project results have been impressive. In St. Louis, Missouri, San Francisco, and Houston, school officials found that students in Accelerated Schools showed the greatest gains in test scores of all schools in their districts.

All schools in the project have also shown substantial increases in parental involvement.

At Hollibrook Elementary, a new Parent Center—equipped with sewing machines, typewriters, stationery, and cribs—is a busy place. At the Hoover School in Redwood City, California, attendance at back-to-school night increased from 30 percent all the way to 95 percent.

The combination of strategies works—especially in improving student self-esteem. Says Valerie Curb, "It used to take kids about two weeks to decide which ability group they were in and to give themselves labels. Now, with the Accelerated School Project and their enriched classes, they all think they're smart."

—Melissa Etlin

NEA Human and Civil Rights

For more information about Accelerated Schools, contact Henry Levin, Director, Accelerated Schools Project, CERAS 402S, School of Education, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305. (415-725-1676).

Mike Spinelli

Camila Schneider and her fourth grade class at Daniel Webster school in San Francisco are part of the Accelerated Schools Project, a three-year old effort designed to maximize student learning. Schneider's shown here with one of many reproductions of historical artifacts that are kept in a trunk in her classroom.

WASHINGTON WATCH

Lost in the Shuffle: The 'Other' Side of The 101st Congress

The federal government's involvement in education doesn't often make headlines. But that doesn't mean there isn't news—this time, good news.

The members of the recently adjourned 101st Congress—when they weren't tearing each other's hair out over a budget compromise—racked up a pretty impressive list of accomplishments.

In case you hadn't heard:

► Congress voted to increase federal education spending to $27.4 billion a year. That's up $2.7 billion—about 11 percent—from last year's $24.7 billion total. Even taking inflation into account, that's a $1.7 billion real gain.

Overall, education fared well in comparison with other domestic spending programs competing for limited dollars.

► Two federal programs did especially well this time around. Congress boosted funding for the Chapter 1 compensatory program 16 percent. Pell grants for college-bound students received a 12 percent increase.

► Congress reauthorized and expanded the Vocational Education Act, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act, Head Start, the Asbestos School Hazard Abatement Act, and education programs for the homeless.

► Congress passed a landmark civil rights bill—the Americans with Disabilities Act. And the 101st passed the Environmental Education Act, Mathematics and Science Education Initiatives, the Gun-Free Schools Zone Act, the Campus Right-To-Know Act (forcing colleges to release campus crime statistics), the Children's Television Act (reducing the amount of advertising in children's shows), and a minimum wage compromise.

► There's victory to be found, too, in those bills that Congress turned down. Congress failed to pass constitutional amendments to mandate school prayer or limit free speech by "protecting" the flag. And Congress didn't pass laws restricting political action committees or giving the President the right to a line-item veto.

► Don't blame this Congress for the demise of the Family and Medical Leave Act and the Civil Rights Act of 1990. Congress passed both laws; President Bush vetoed them.

► Perhaps the most important victory: a broad, new consensus shared by politicians and the public that education is an important federal concern. That's a far cry from the Reagan administration's attempts to eliminate any federal role in education.

But that consensus doesn't negate the enormity of the next step the nation must take. Politicians must move from "education as a federal concern" to "education as a national priority."

Local Look

OHIO

Communication Central

Communities across Central Ohio have education on their minds, thanks to the public relations efforts of Central Ohio Teachers Association.

The public relations campaign—complete with print, radio, and television advertising, billboards, and slide presentations for community groups—is the brainchild of Association public relations chair Bob Eakin, a Whitehall City teacher.

The campaign has garnered numerous awards, with such themes as "Schools are Seeing Red," "A+ for Schools," and "Teachers Change Lives." This year, the local produced commercials on parental involvement.

COTA is also helping local efforts by matching OEA funds for local advertising projects.

"The best public relations is done at the local level, one-on-one," says Eakin. "But we also need mass media efforts to keep education, teaching, and parental involvement in the forefront."

LOUISIANA

A Big Win For Bargaining

The St. Helena Association of Educators succeeded in winning bargaining rights for ESP members, making it the fourth LAE local to bargain for both teachers and support staff.

The Board of Education overwhelmingly approved a contract for the 250 teachers and support personnel. It provides additional leave days, greater job protection, and a role in monitoring the administrative budget.

Previous efforts by the local to force the school board to bargain were unsuccessful. But a breakthrough came under the leadership of superintendent Myrtie Wolford, a lifetime LAE-NEA member.

In addition, local members convinced board members that accepting the new contract would enhance the cooperation needed to pass a school bond issue.

The victory represents the successful conclusion of a five-year effort by local members.

IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

California Lt. Governor Leo McCarthy (center)—a friend of education—discusses a ballot initiative with (left to right) SBUT PAC former Chair Bob Dye, Vice Chair Mara Littell, Chair Arnold Tena, and teacher political activist Jim Dimitriou.

Familiarity Breeds Cooperation

For Association members in five Southern California affiliates, there's no doubt that political action is an integral part of education.

Since 1972, the Beach City Secondary Teachers, the Centinela Valley Secondary Teachers Association, the Manhattan Beach Teachers Association, the Palos Verdes Faculty Association, and the Redondo Beach City Teachers Association—all part of the same UniServ unit—have banded together to form the South Bay United Teachers Political Action Committee (SBUT PAC).

Together, the five affiliates have some 950 members, about half of whom are active in the PAC program at any one time.

PAC chair Arnold Tena explains that there's a periodic turnover of members who stuff envelopes, lobby, and walk the precinct, giving the group constant vitality and enthusiasm. Retired teachers also play an important role, helping out during daytime hours when teachers are in class.

SBUT PAC usually lobbies on its own, but sometimes works with the local PTA in sending a contingent of teachers, administrators, parents, and students to Sacramento to lobby state legislators on matters that they feel are important. About once every two years, SBUT PAC representatives—members of NEA's Congressional Contact Team—visit congressional representatives and senators in Washington, D.C.

Palos Verdes Faculty Association president Perry Lynn says all the hard work has paid off. "We've generated good relationships with members of Congress as well as local legislators," he explains. "We know one another and what we can do."

Perhaps even more important, though, he notes that SBUT PAC has made teachers more aware of the importance of politics and the political process. "For years, when education funding was limited to local property taxes, people didn't think much about the state legislature in terms of money," he says.

"But with the passage of Proposition 13 here in California, funding shifted to the state level, and power went along with it. Our members now realize that there's a lot at stake. Not just money, but programs, laws affecting teacher retirement, a whole realm of things."

MASSACHUSETTS

All Together Now: Beat Those Odds!

The August odds, statewide, were 2:1 against them; their November victory, locally, was a 4:1 landslide. Fall River opponents of Ballot Question 3 set the pace for their state's defeat of the drastic tax-trimming measure.

And K-12 teachers, community college faculty, and teacher assistants helped set the pace for Fall River.

Other unions, from firefighters to carpenters to garment makers, turned out. So did students, 15 of 16 local elected officials, and seniors.

Wilcox says Association members sent about 10,000 postcards to friends and family in the community of some 93,000. The firefighters and carpenters made lawn signs.

"Groups from very different backgrounds all realized everyone's quality of life was at stake," explains Jim Wilcox, president of the Fall River Teachers Association.

SOUTH DAKOTA

A First for Binding Arbitration

The Mitchell Education Association recently became the first local in South Dakota to win binding arbitration rights.

Now a federal mediator will cast the deciding vote if a bargaining impasse is declared. (Previously, state factfinders made non-binding recommendations, which were often ignored.)

"We're trying to do something to lead the teachers of South Dakota out of 51st place," says MEA President Dan Scott, referring to South Dakota's last place ranking in teacher salaries.

Buoyed by this victory, the South Dakota Education Association will again press the state legislature to pass a law guaranteeing binding arbitration rights to all local Associations.

NEW MEXICO

Deming Says No to 'Noland'

Due to the persuasive efforts of NEA-Deming, the Deming school board recently decided—against the advice of its lawyers—to scrap two termination policies that allowed virtually wholesale firings of teachers and support staff.

One of the policies—known as the "Noland Policy"—refers to an unfriendly interpretation of a reform law. It allows nearly at-will firing of teachers.

A second policy, of the board's own making, permitted at-will firing of support staff.

"The change in board policy didn't happen over night," explains NEA-Deming President Ruth Eaves.

The local began building support in the community three years ago and took an active role in the last board election. "It worked," Eaves says.

Deming's new termination policy, based in part on NEA policy recommendations, provides due process and is consistent for all district employees: certified, noncertified, and administrative.

State Side

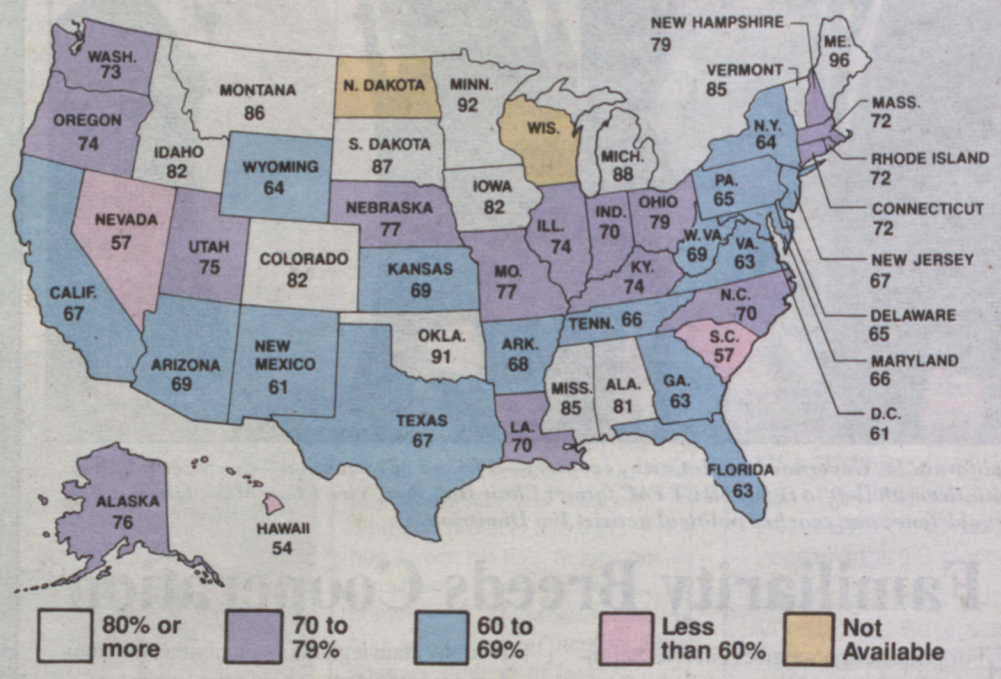
THEY CAN VOTE, BUT DO THEY?

Only about 68 million people—about 36 percent of the 186 million eligible voters—turned out to vote in this year's elections.

In all but the District of Columbia, North Carolina, and Louisiana, which had record or near-record numbers of voters going to the polls, voter turnout for this year's elections was dismal, according to the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate.

Turnout was highest in Montana and Maine (55 percent); turnout was lowest in Tennessee (20 percent).

The map below shows the percentage of voting-age Americans in each state and the District of Columbia who were registered to vote in 1988.



Source: National Clearinghouse on Election Administration

UTAH

UEA's Four-Day Week Gains Ground

The Utah Education Association is taking credit for the spread of the four-day school week throughout the state. Four years ago, UEA recommended the longer day/shorter week strategy as a money-saver.

The theory: reduce costs for heating, lighting, substitutes, and busing, and you might have a shot at moving Utah's notoriously low teacher salaries past the inflation rate.

Now it turns out that the four-day week has improved the quality of school life, even the quality of education. One superintendent reports tests scores up, especially in elementary schools—"they have more time in class," he says.

In the eight high schools that signed on this year, principals are already reporting higher attendance, because there's no longer competition from athletic events.

ILLINOIS

Superintendents File Suit over Funding

A group of 47 Illinois school district superintendents filed a lawsuit last month to challenge the constitutionality of the state's current public school funding system.

Called the Committee for Educational Rights, the group opposes the current system—largely funded by local property taxes—which allows for a range of per pupil spending from $2,100 to over $10,000.

This, Committee spokespeople note, does not provide an equitable and "efficient system of high quality public education," as called for by the state Constitution.

Similar lawsuits have recently succeeded in prompting changes in state education funding formulas in Kentucky, Texas, New Jersey, and Montana.

Illinois Education Association President Lee Betterman says IEA will study the issue in depth in coming months. "The sources of education funding—and their distribution—must be reexamined," she says. "We want equal opportunity. There must be additional money to bring the poor districts up."

NEVADA

Nevada Leads Drive For More Dollars

The Nevada State Education Association—formerly Nevada's lone organization in the fight to gain more money for education, now has company.

NSEA has been joined in a coalition by a group of business and gaming leaders formerly opposed to the idea of more funds for schools.

What changed their minds? An NSEA petition drive for a corporate income tax ballot initiative.

When polls showed that such an initiative could win (although actually the initiative was defeated in November), opponents realized they had to deal.

As a result, business and gaming leaders have offered to go with NSEA to the legislature to advocate a 1 percent business payroll tax and annual business license fee that would raise $100-130 million for education and other state needs. NSEA accepted, and agreed to stop its corporate tax campaign.

"We've always said that if anyone had a better idea, we would be willing to talk," says NSEA President Chris Giunchigliani, "At first we were ignored—but not anymore."

NORTH CAROLINA

Polling Their Own For Reform Opinions

Taking the lead from a recent Gallup poll of leading national educators, the North Carolina Association of Educators asked its own educational leaders what they think of American—and North Carolina—public schools.

NCAE received permission from the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) to use the same Gallup poll conducted during NFIE's "Thanks to Teachers" celebration.

Sixty-two percent of NCAE leaders think America's public schools are doing a "fair" job, while North Carolina schools are rated slightly higher.

Ninety-three percent of the North Carolina educators want to see the role of teachers expanded to include more substantive decision making in such areas as curriculum design and scheduling. At the same time, only 46 percent felt they had the ability to influence school change.

Asked what they would change about the current system, one NCAE leader wrote: "I would change public attitudes toward educators. The responsibility for educating youth today belongs to the school, home, and business community. Teachers are given the immense responsibility without the finances, power, and authority."

MAINE

The Answer: Time, Money, Preparation

What can be done to improve student teaching? The Maine Teachers Association's Instruction and Professional Development division asked the people involved: education students, K-12 faculty, and university faculty.

Of 110 people surveyed, 87 percent say K-12 faculty could work with student teachers more effectively if they were paid for it; 75 percent say better preparation would help.

University faculty could be more helpful, say 89 percent of respondents, if they had more time to develop university-school relationships in the field. Eighty-four percent note that committing more university dollars to help strengthen student teaching programs would help, too.

A majority agrees that students need better preparation in teaching skills and more knowledge about the classroom before beginning student teaching.

GEORGIA

GAE Wins a Round Over Drug Tests

A U.S. District court judge has put on hold a new state law requiring all new applicants for positions in Georgia public schools to undergo drug testing.

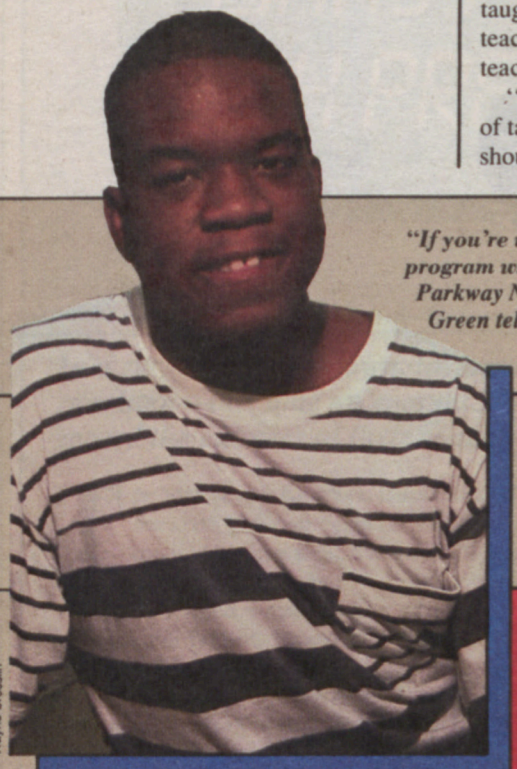
The federal district court decision, which declared the state's new mandatory applicant drug testing law unconstitutional, concurred with a lawsuit filed by the Georgia Association of Educators.

The federal judge ruled that the state's asserted interest in a "drug-free work force" was insufficient to outweigh the privacy interests of public employees to be free from governmental intrusion into their lives.

GAE argued the statute violated the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution and that the state had no compelling reasons for testing public employees.

Responding to GAE's victory, Debbie Simonds, GAE President, said, "This is truly a great day for those who believe in constitutional freedoms as well as the professional dignity of educators."

IN THE CLASSROOM



Wayne Crosslin

"If you're willing to do the work, this program will help you get Bs," Parkway North student Perez Green tells other students.

Tracking Down Alternatives

Six years ago, NEA members in suburban St. Louis agreed that tracking was failing their students. Here's one example of how NEA members are getting the caste out of class.

Wayne Crosslin

English teachers at Parkway North High School outside St. Louis, Missouri, didn't like what they found after an intensive review of the school's curriculum.

They discovered students on the low track were trapped in a cycle of failure, suffering from low self-esteem, finding it almost impossible to learn.

"And no one wanted to teach the basic English classes," says Association member Tom Wehling, a Parkway North English teacher. "There were discipline problems, and even though teachers tried to do their best, they couldn't seem to reach the students."

In addition, says Parkway North teacher Carol Kolar, the basic English classes tended to be all-Black, segregating a student population that had been integrated through voluntary busing from nearby St. Louis six years before.

The English teachers met and talked about their mutual concerns. After many lengthy meetings, the educators agreed: the trouble wasn't with the students or the teaching, it was with tracking. And the answer was simple: tracking had to go.

"We realized we weren't reaching a major section of our student population because tracking had simply turned them off and shunted them around," says Carol Kolar. "They weren't getting the individual attention they needed, and they never moved out of the basic levels."

But the school needed to do more than just abolish tracking. In its place, says Wehling, the department had to provide a new system where learning was the focus of the day, and where individual instruction could take place.

The solution came from the team of ninth grade teachers who joined Parkway North when the school expanded from three grades to four, six years ago. Their junior high school had a system without tracking but with additional classes to help students who needed more attention and assistance in their work.

"The program was a form of transition for struggling students," says Kolar, "a way to keep them in the regular classes but provide them an opportunity to increase their capacity for learning."

Parkway North's teachers decided to give it a try, and the English Skills and Skills Tutorial programs were born.

The Skills Tutorial program gives ninth and tenth graders the opportunity to receive additional help. "These classes are geared specifically to help students who need to refine their study skills or have other problems affecting their learning," says Kolar, the Skills Tutorial coordinator.

The English Skills class, an elective, is taught by the student's regular English teacher, strengthening the bond between teacher and student.

"We want to give students the option of taking the class," notes Kolar. "It should never be viewed as punishment or mandatory."

"We do a lot of 'anticipatory work,' pre-teaching, in which we help students with upcoming work," adds Fred Shue, who teaches English Skills in addition to the rest of his class load. "This way, they're prepared to do well in their regular English classes and aren't intimidated by the other students."

And teachers in the regular English classes, adds Tom Wehling, emphasize cooperative learning.

"The students work together; everyone benefits," explains Wehling. "Grouping the students heterogeneously doesn't work without an adjustment in the educator's own philosophy."

The Skills Tutorial is held on alternate days. Carol Kolar and teacher assistant Jaclyn Morgan work on study skills such as time management, note-taking, following directions, forming study groups, and participating in class.

"We work with the rest of the student's teachers," Kolar says, "and discuss the concepts and problems the student doesn't understand."

Parents are also asked to share in the student's development by attending parent workshops and using the study guides provided by the English department.

"The parental response has been overwhelming," Kolar notes.

The program also promotes interdisciplinary work, adds Kolar.

"This has reenergized our faculty and pulled the disciplines together," she explains. "We're teaming up, and that's made us more aware of our common goal—educating kids."

Wayne Crosslin

Parkway North science teacher Rod Reed (above, left) says the English Department's program has benefitted his students as well. Program coordinator Carol Kolar (above, right) works with Tony Yn in a Skills Tutorial Center.

English Skills teacher Fred Shue reviews a writing assignment with student Lisa Longhi.

And what about the kids? "Many of the students who enrolled in the program as freshmen and sophomores are now doing well in their classes," says Kolar. "More important, they now believe they can do well in the regular classes, thanks to the skills programs. They have confidence in themselves."

Parkway North sophomore Perez Green says he encourages other students to enter the program.

"During my first semester I wasn't in the program and had all sorts of problems, but this helped me learn to study and participate in class," says Green. "Now I tell other students this is a place where you can get *B*s for your work."

That confidence spills over into other classes, says Rod Reed, a science teacher at Parkway North.

"One day, my class was working on an experiment, says Reed. "When one student explained how he would proceed, one of the skills students said, 'But he isn't following the directions.'

"And he was right," adds Reed. "Ten years ago, that student would never have challenged the other's knowledge. Now, he has the confidence to speak up."

"These are kids that simply need more time," says Fred Shue. "And if you open your minds and create the right environment for learning, those changes, big or small, will guarantee their success."

Efforts of NEA members at Parkway North have prompted other schools to look at alternatives to tracking. Recently, Parkway Central, Parkway South, and Parkway West High Schools abolished the basic level and created English skills programs of their own.

—Anita Merina

NEA and Tracking

For more information on tracking, send for *Academic Tracking*, the final report of the NEA Subcommittee on Tracking, by contacting NEA Instruction and Professional Development, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

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TECH TALK

COMPUTER LINKS PAST WITH PRESENT

Kathleen Duplantier and her students are building a computerized encyclopedia of their local community. Inset photo: master folk artist Tom Colvin shows students how he splits river cane to use in Choctaw baskets.

In a rural Louisiana town, history is being rewritten—this time on computer—as students record the cultures of their community.

The idea struck Kathleen Duplantier while she was taking her sixth grade students on a walking tour of their home town, Abita Springs, a town of 700 people located 50 miles north of New Orleans.

"As we walked, I realized how rich our region is in cultural tradition and yet how little of that was accessible in our classrooms," says Duplantier.

"We have families of German, French, Italian, African-American, and Native American descent," Duplantier continues. "This area is an important Choctaw Indian site, yet few students know the story of the Choctaws' life here.

"I decided to publish that walking tour, and then thought, if I took it a little further, we'd have a wonderful resource." That idea, played out all the way, made Duplantier one of five 1990 Christa McAuliffe Educators. The Educators are recognized by NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education for leadership in improving their schools and communities, and for success in working with students.

What Duplantier did was mix her dream with technology. The result: the Hypertext Folklife Project to create a cultural encyclopedia of the area.

Here's how it works: Students in the town's elementary and junior high schools collect information about area's various cultures and folk traditions. Students record, for example, the oral histories of the region's elderly residents and local artisans.

They enter their findings for retrieval by HyperCard," a software program that calls up information from existing data bases as well as from data bases created by teachers and students on computer disks and video disks. Words, graphics, audio, and video sequences are synchronized on computer and video screens.

"What we've done here," Duplantier explains, "is build a curriculum around our culture, then enter that culture into computers."

The information in the cultural encyclopedia is cross-referenced so students can retrieve information through word association.

"A student looking up alligator recipes in the computer can also spin off into a section on alligator hunting or alligator folktales," say Duplantier.

Duplantier's goal is to videotape all the folklife curriculum activities and enter clips onto a videodisc. She's now raising money to buy the necessary equipment.

With that goal in mind, students videotape their major projects, including demonstrations, local speakers, plays—to be included in the cultural encyclopedia.

"Abita Springs is their roots, and their roots are in a computer for all to see," Duplantier notes with pride. "This project validates who they are and celebrates their rich cultural heritage. What child, what community wouldn't be excited about that?"

—Anita Merina

TECHNOLOGY TIDBITS

Computers for All

Thanks to the prodding of the Michigan Education Association, the state is making good on its governor's promise to put a computer in every classroom.

Classrooms of Tomorrow, the Michigan Department of Education's computer project, has already distributed 8,500 fully equipped computer stations and will award another 16,000 computers this year.

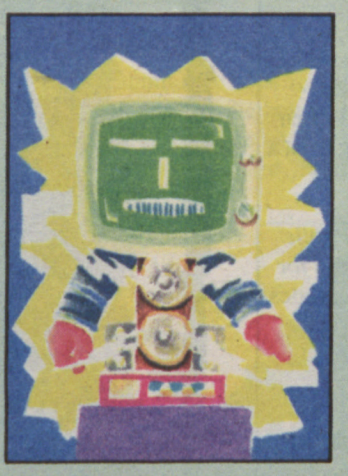
Hi-Tech Highs

Centennial High School in Corona, California, recently became the first school in the U.S. to install and use a wide-band video switching system based on fiber optics. The system can simultaneously transmit high-quality programs to up to 48 classrooms at once. Each classroom in the school has a wide-screen monitor.

Meanwhile, in Minnesota, Eagan High School has opened its doors, enabling students and the rest of the community to take a look at a school with technology built in, literally. The school boasts computers, videodiscs, a satellite dish, cable television, and a telephone in every classroom. The price tag: $41 million.

Meet Roboteacher

Somewhere in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, MTA member Donald Pottle's invention is on the loose.



Pottle created the 7-foot-tall, 720-pound robot to help his science students at Shrewsbury High School.

A technological mix of television monitors, cassette decks, speakers, and synthesizers, Roboteacher was so popular that the police department and local Lions Club bought him to help in the community's drug awareness campaign.

Media Methods

New Jersey special education teacher Lynn Regan is using a multimedia approach to teaching that's having a profound effect on her students.

Regan's mainstreamed special ed students and her class of mixed-handicap students have written their own mystery novels and developed their own documentary and newscast.

The project helped Regan hit her target: improving students' writing skills. Most students have improved their skills substantially, and three have returned to regular English classes. Regan herself was selected the IBM/*Technology and Learning* Teacher of the Year.

Give School a Call

One device that's helping parents and school employees stay in closer contact is a computer-based voice-mail system. A parent calling the system might find a note from a teacher on the day's homework, a query about a student's absence, or congratulations from the principal directed to the members of a prize-winning marching band. In some systems, the parent, in turn, can leave messages for school people.

Commonly made up of a computer, an automatic dialing mechanism, and software listing students' telephone numbers, a typical system, according to the *New York Times*, might use 4 to 12 phone lines (serving 300 students each) and cost upwards of $8,000. That's about $4 per student per year if the system's kept for five years. The advantages of these systems are that they're two-way communications tools that both parents and school employees can use any time of the day. The disadvantages: cost, and in some instances, mumbling messages.

—A.M.

RESOURCES

TV/Radio Tips

My Past Is My Own—*CBS (Schoolbreak Special), Tuesday, December 4, 4-5 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* A Black woman takes her niece and nephew back in time to show them what the fight for civil rights was like.

A study guide for all CBS Schoolbreak Specials is available from CBS Educational and Community Services, 51 West 52nd St., New York, NY 10019.

Craig Blankenhorn

Stood Up—*ABC (Afterschool Special), Thursday, December 6, 4-5 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* A girl sues her prom date when he stands her up.

For the ABC Learning Alliance guide to all Afterschool Specials, contact ABC Community Relations, 77 W. 66th St., ninth floor, New York, NY 10023.

Hallmark Hall of Fame: Foxfire— *CBS, Saturday, December 15, 9-11 p.m. ET.* A drama about a farm family's struggle to hold on to the past.

A Matter of Conscience—*CBS, Tuesday, December 18, 4-5 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* A young man is devastated when his grandfather is accused of having been a Nazi death camp officer.

The Door in the Wall—*National Public Radio, December (check local listings for date and time).* Colleen Dewhurst narrates this story of a young boy in medieval England and his courageous quest for strength and identity.

The Dreamer of Oz: The L. Frank Baum Story—*NBC, December (check local listings for date and time).* A special about the man whose imagination created *The Wizard of Oz*. A poster/study guide is available from NBC affiliate stations.

Earth to Kids: A Guide to Products for a Healthy Planet—*HBO, December (check local listings for dates and times).* Learn how to save the environment by knowing what's OK to use (and what isn't).

Richard Cartwright

Lies of the Heart—*CBS (Schoolbreak Special), Tuesday, January 8, 4-5 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* A young man has a golden future until he becomes a hit-and-run driver.

Cats: Caressing the Tiger—*PBS, Wednesday, January 9, 8-9 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* This National Geographic special looks at America's favorite pet—the cat *(photo above, right).*

The National Geographic Society and

Chevron offer free taping rights for all their 1991 specials to educators at schools and nonprofit educational institutions. For a free *Resource Guide*, write to National Geographic Society Specials, c/o Chevron, 742 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94710.

The Emancipation of Lizzie Stern—*CBS (Schoolbreak Special), Tuesday, January 22, 4-5 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* When her mother decides to move to another city, a teenager goes to court to have herself legally "emancipated" so she won't have to go.

The Less Than Perfect Daughter (working title)—*ABC (Afterschool Special), Thursday, January 24, 4-5 p.m. ET (closed-captioned).* A young woman tries to improve her relations with her mother.

Editor's note: First Lady Barbara Bush has taken her reading campaign to TV. In public service announcements on all networks and many cable channels, the First Lady urges children to read. The idea came from KIDSNET, a computerized clearinghouse for children's TV and radio.

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Innovation

How NEA members are changing the way schools work

In Alaska

In Kenai, It's Hands On For Science

Nobody sits on the sidelines during elementary school science classes in Alaska's Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. A new hands-on science program has every K-6 student involved.

Kindergartners in the program explore how adult family members utilize science at home and in their jobs. Third graders experiment with ways that plants adapt to alterations in their environment. And fourth graders analyze familiar substances by examining their physical properties.

The program was developed by the district's science curriculum committee—six teachers and the director of elementary education. The group was motivated by studies showing that a hands-on approach works best by accommodating every learning style and getting all students—including minorities and girls often shut out of science—involved.

And, as Association member and elementary education director Betty Leonard says, "Children remember most the things they do, not the things they see."

The school district has 4,800 elementary students in 27 schools throughout the Kenai peninsula, located some air 60 miles south of Anchorage. While hands-on learning isn't new to the district, this plan makes it the primary teaching method.

The program, instituted this year, also emphasizes conservation and makes students aware of the many science careers available.

Last year, to prepare for the program, the district used a Title II grant to buy materials. Teachers received in-service training and copies of a new curriculum guide written by the science curriculum committee.

The guide contains, among other things, key concepts to be emphasized at each grade level, performance indicators, lesson plans, and recommended texts and supplementary materials.

The program includes these key concepts among others: the five senses (kindergarten), careers (first grade), magnets (second grade), sound (third grade), simple machines (fourth grade), electricity and magnetism (fifth grade), and matter (sixth grade).

Nancy Stengl, a fifth grade teacher at Redoubt Elementary in Soldotna and a member of the curriculum committee, teaches magnetism by having students experiment with water and air displacement, air pressure, hot air balloons, wires, batteries, and electricity—before they even open a textbook.

"These hands-on activities pique the students' interest," explains Stengl, "and they make the text more meaningful."

Curriculum committee chair and sixth grade teacher Zada Friedersdorff has involved her students in a lesson on landfills and waste. Divided into groups of five, the kids use bottles as miniature experimental landfills to observe how garbage rots.

They'll submit their findings to the local landfill in the hopes of improving garbage disposal.

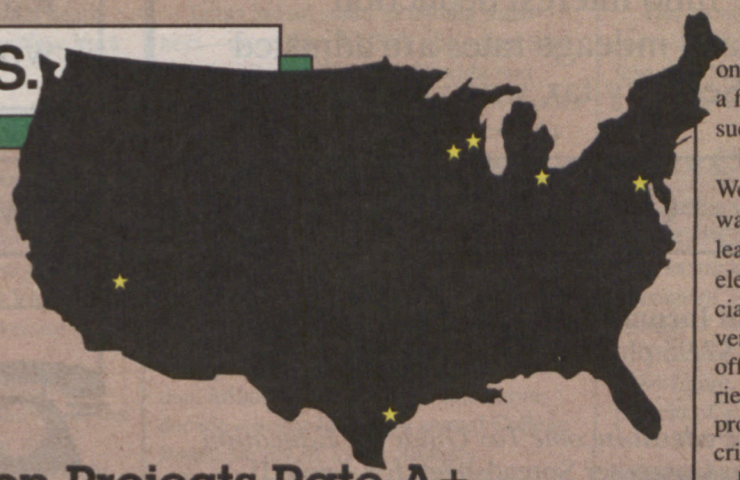
Eventually, says Leonard, the district hopes to extend the hands-on approach to more subject areas and to make the curriculum interdisciplinary.

—Diane Dismuke

Roy Shapley

Above: Bottles containing refuse serve as miniature landfills in Zada Friedersdorff's sixth grade classroom at Redoubt Elementary School. Left: Students Shane Cotman and Angela Wheat study how and under what conditions different types of garbage rot.

Across the U.S.



Local Association Projects Rate A+

Six local Associations are winners of NEA A+ awards, established three years ago to bring national, state, and community recognition to local efforts aimed at improving teaching and learning.

The winners were announced as part of the observance of American Education Week, November 11-17, and each project was written up in the December *Ladies Home Journal*. Here are the six winning programs and a brief description of each.

► From Maryland, the Teachers Association of Baltimore County was honored for a dropout prevention strategy. The program helps parents enhance their own self-esteem so as to better help their children achieve school success. Child care and both day and evening workshops encourage parent participation.

► From Nevada, the Clark County Classroom Teachers Association was honored for its Effective Schools Project, a program that involves the entire Grant Bowler Elementary School population in decision making that affects daily school life.

The project includes rewards for academic achievement and good behavior, recognition for school staff contributions, and outreach to parents and community.

► From Ohio, the Sylvania Education Association was honored for its Science Investigations Fair at Stranahan Elementary School. The project, for fifth graders, nurtures children's natural interest in science by bringing them into scientific environments and providing them with mentors who are science professionals.

► From Texas, the Conroe Education Association was honored for a Prekindergarten Parent Involvement Program, which brings parents, teachers, and administrators face-to-face in three one-hour sessions aimed to forge a firm partnership for student success.

► From Wisconsin, the Westfield Education Association was honored for expanding learning opportunities for rural elementary students through special Saturday and summer adventure programs. The programs offer hands-on learning experiences in such areas as video production, foreign languages, crime solving, and dairy farming.

► Also from Wisconsin, the Green Bay Education Association was honored for its task force on teenage employment, which has been studying the connection between high school student employment and school success.

As a result of its findings, the Association recommends that parents monitor student work and earnings, and work with schools and businesses to ensure that student performance doesn't suffer.

Its report prompted the state's superintendent of schools to appoint a special task force to review state and federal regulations on youth employment.

—D.D.

GOOD BAD NEWS

The Bad News Is:
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The Good News Is:
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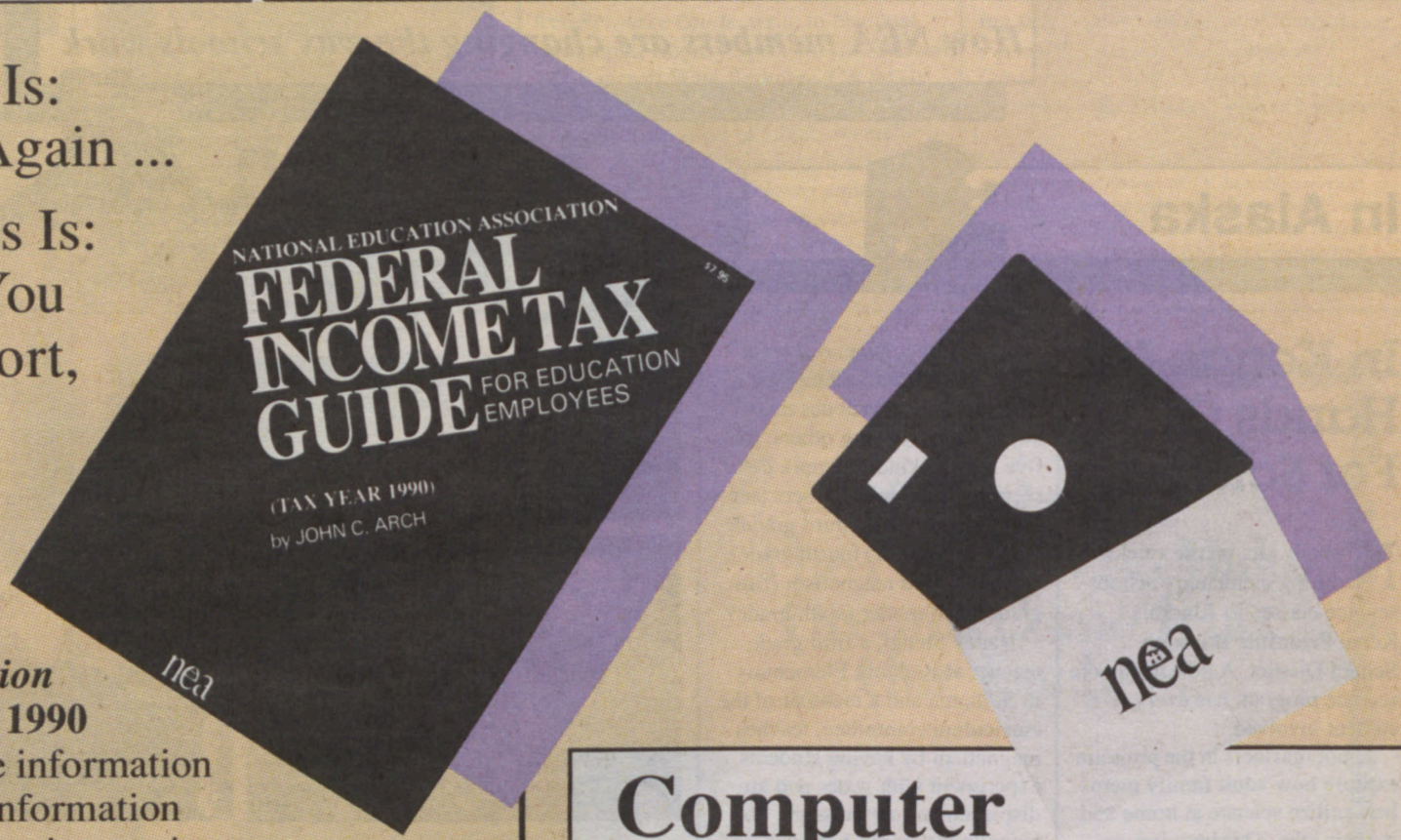

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Real-life examples to illustrate points

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Social Security tax wage base is higher

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IDEA EXCHANGE

Hang It on the Bulletin Board

Do you have windows instead of walls, leaving little space for bulletin boards? Computer teacher Carol Zuvers of Muskegon Heights (Michigan) Middle School has that problem, and she's found two solutions.

For one thing, Zuvers covers her windows with colorful posters. This gives the posters a nice back-lit effect—and shields the computer monitors from sunlight, making them easier to read.

Zuvers also strings wires along the limited wall space, and on them clips or hangs (by the fold) newspapers and other materials to interest students. Some of these displays encourage students to ask questions about topics beyond their immediate lessons, while others are hints, procedures, and references Zuvers wants close at hand.

At Home with Voc Ed

Retired New Jersey vocational education teacher William Monahan says students reacted the same way in his classes as in their academic courses: they were interested in projects that drew on their own lives.

At about mid-year—after his students got comfortable with trade math and measuring—Monahan would ask them to draw a floor and wall plan of their bedrooms. From this plan, each student built a model out of plaster board.

The kids used their models to determine things like the cost of reflooring the room in tile, wood, linoleum, or carpeting, getting prices from newspaper ads and home improvement centers. They also figured the cost of wallpapering or painting the rooms.

Monahan says his students liked the project so much they'd be in the classroom, ready for work, before the class was scheduled to begin.

Mail Call for The Middle East

First graders in Lisa Rae Anderson's class at Northern Hills Elementary School in Norfolk, Nebraska, celebrated Constitution Day—September 17—with a dash of patriotism that could be adopted any time of year.

Besides wearing red, white, and blue, displaying a flag on each desk, and signing their names to a copy of the U.S. Constitution, they wrote "thank you" and "thinking of you" cards for members of the military serving in the Middle East.

Anderson mailed the cards to military personnel from the Norfolk area, getting their addresses from a list in a local paper. "Hopefully, the cards will brighten their day and make them realize that we—little people included—appreciate their sacrifice and think of them daily," says Anderson.

Mark Your Calendars for Super Bowl Friday!

For most of the nation, January means Super Bowl Sunday. But for students in Gayle Erskine's consumer and family studies classes at Prairie Middle School in Aurora, Colorado, January means Super Bowl *Friday*.

That's the day the kids dress to support their favorite Super Bowl football team and play their own version of the game, which, Erskine notes, is a great informal evaluation tool.

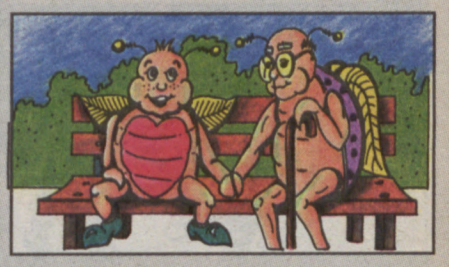
To prepare for the contest, Erskine draws a stadium on the chalkboard and divides the class into two teams. Then she tosses a coin, and the game begins.

For every question a team answers correctly, the ball moves 10 yards. When a team misses an answer, there's a fumble, and the ball goes over to the other side. Erskine issues penalties when students get too loud.

Erskine bases her game on nutrition facts, but notes the game is adaptable for any subject area.

"Lovebugs" Swarm Around Elderly

One evening a week, Lovebugs—local sixth graders —gather in a Curwensville, Pennsylvania, senior citizen home. Kids and seniors chat, get acquainted, and take part in planned activities together.

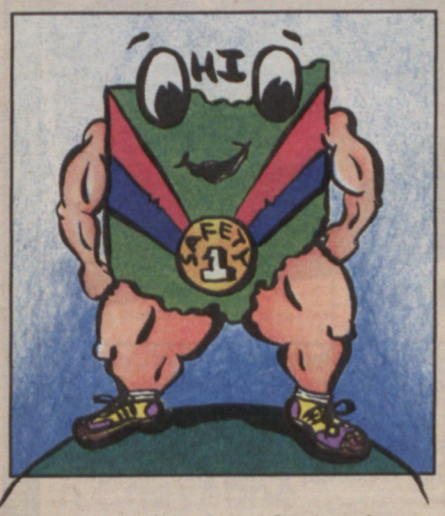


Sixth grade teacher Gust Mederia helped develop the annual six-week voluntary program two years ago. This year, for the first time, parents of the 80 student participants are helping operate the program. The Lovebugs are giving students a good name, Mederia reports, both in the school and in the community.

The seniors aren't the only ones who benefit. Mederia says the project gives the youngsters a chance to spend time together in a wholesome setting. And as kids get acquainted with their elderly friends, she says, student discipline problems seem to disappear.

TRENDS

Declining Accident Rate Is No Accident



The accidental death rate for Americans has dropped 21 percent over the past 10 years, notes a recent report from the National Safety Council. Even the number of accidents has decreased over the decade, dropping from 105,312 in 1979 to 94,500 last year despite the continuing increase in the U.S. population.

The Council said no one cause has been responsible for the decrease. Public awareness campaigns against drunk driving and promotions of boat safety have helped, for example, and so have tougher regulations. Still, accidents rank only behind heart disease, cancer, and strokes as a leading cause of death.

Ohio has the lowest accidental death rate in the nation, followed by New York State.

Death in the Family

Family violence is the most common type of violence in this country—violent incidents occur in some 8 to 10 million American families each year, says Richard Gelles, director of the Family Violence Research Program at the University of Rhode Island.

In fact, 10 percent of all homicides in the U.S. are committed by relatives of the victims. Family violence is far more extensive than official statistics indicate, says Gelles, pointing out that even his own figures rely on what people are willing to reveal about themselves.

National PTA Grows Again

More than 200,000 people joined the PTA for the first time this year, helping to bring national membership to 6.8 million. Now the sixth largest association in the U.S., the PTA grew by 3.2 percent this year.

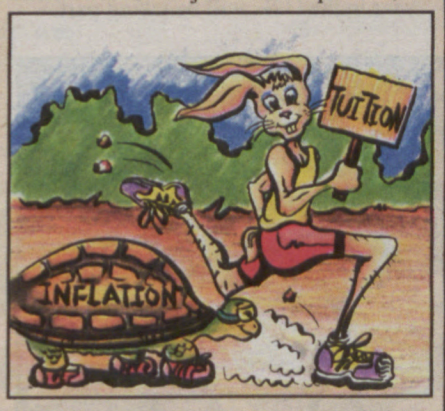
"More parents are getting serious about education and want to be involved," notes National PTA President Ann Lynch. At the same time, adds Lynch, "more employers realize that the majority of their employees are working parents and need time off to participate in their children's school activities."

Texas led all states in adding members—more than 44,000—bringing total membership to 818,000. Florida was second, adding 22,000 members to reach a total membership of 335,000. Kentucky, which gained almost 15,000 members, now boasts more than 192,000 PTA members.

College Tuition Hikes Falter

College tuition continues to increase faster than inflation—as it's done this entire decade—according to an annual College Board survey of 2,822 colleges.

From June '89 to June '90, the overall inflation rate was just under 5 percent,



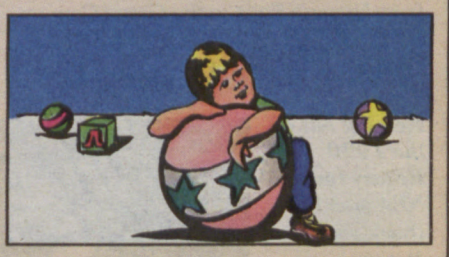
while average bills for tuition and mandatory fees increased 8 percent at private four-year colleges and 7 percent at public four-year colleges.

The up side: In both kinds of institution, tuition increases were 1 percentage point less than the 1988-89 increases—the first such drop since 1984.

More Care, More Costs

Americans spent $15.5 billion for child care in 1987 (the latest year for which figures are available). That came to an average of $49 per week for each U.S. family.

That's up more than 17 percent from the 1984 figure. And it comes to about 7 percent of average family income, but more than 20 percent of the family



incomes of those near the poverty line.

The increase isn't all inflation, says the Census Bureau, which provided the stats. Children may be getting care more hours every week.

And more children are getting care. Between 1984 and 1987 the number of children under 15 in day care increased by about 9 percent, to 28.8 million. The number of children under the age of 5 in day care rose by about 11 percent, to 9.1 million.

People

Craig Kojima

School Keeps Bell-ringing Tradition Alive

Take six 75-year-old copper bells, many more modern aluminum bell chimes and tone bars, some 30 enthusiastic sixth graders, sixth grade teacher **Mary Ellen Newmann** (who taught music years ago), and what do you get? The bell choir from Royal (Elementary) School in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Newmann organized the student bell choir three years ago. Its nucleus is the six usable British copper bells remaining from an original set of 16 that Royal School students played from 1915 to 1950.

The choir is open to all sixth graders. Most don't read music, so Neumann marks with a highlighter the notes each child is to play. The kids then learn the rhythm, count the notes, and play accordingly, using special strikers. The music that results charms residents and tourists throughout Honolulu.

The choir—whose repertoire ranges from Hawaiian songs to Christmas carols to symphonies—performs at various hotels throughout Honolulu for the tourist industry. The group also helps publicize the national 'Just Say No' campaign by playing at branches of a local bank that sponsors the anti-drug program.

Choir members practice one hour each morning before classes. "The kids work on listening skills, music appreciation, and theory, and they experience basic pride in being part of an organization," says Newmann. "And each year, they turn themselves into a performing group."

They Help Rotate the World

Each summer several hundred overseas teenagers tour the U.S. for a month after spending a year on the Rotary Club's Eastern States Student Exchange. And each summer NEA members help Rotarians and their wives staff the tour. Eight NEA members from Pennsylvania and Connecticut helped staff the 1990 tour, which included 327 students from some 30 countries. The 9,300-mile bus tour included visits to big cities, historic sites, and special attractions like Nashville's Opryland.

In addition, the touring group had the chance to marvel at natural wonders from Niagara Falls to the Grand Canyon.

"The tour is our chance to touch the students of the world," says tour director **Al Reitz,** who teaches math and computer science in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. "We spend one summer month trying to bring world peace and understanding one step forward."

Although Reitz has served on the tour staff for 12 years, the 1990 tour was special for him: when the group reached Yosemite National Park, he paused in his duties long enough to marry Ridgefield, Connecticut, health education teacher and tour staffer Mary Linda Eccles. The two met on Eccles' first tour, in 1986.

The 1991 tour will be unique in a different way: for the first time, students from the Ukraine, who are spending this year in the U.S., will be taking part.

Helping out on the 1990 Rotary tour: NEA members (back row) ***Pat Peterson, Al Reitz, Mary Linda Eccles Reitz, Carolyn Cole, Bill Bittle,*** (front row) ***Becky Gallagher, Faye Lawler, and Jan Hill.***

National Football League

An All-Star Friendship

When Green Bay Packer quarterback Anthony Dilweg needs a little "extra coaching" in tough situations, he calls on **James Douglas,** his former teacher.

Douglas was Dilweg's biology teacher at Walt Whitman High School in Rockville, Maryland, and the two built their friendship as they grappled with tough decisions.

When Dilweg was injured his senior year at Walt Whitman, Douglas helped him make the difficult decision to remain behind an extra year. Throughout Dilweg's college and professional career, Douglas has offered support, advice, and friendship.

That's why Dilweg nominated Douglas for the National Football League's Teacher Award Program. Each month of the regular season, the NFL will honor teachers that players feel made an impact on their lives. As the NFL's first awardee, Douglas received $2,500. His award also brought $5,000 to the Walt Whitman High School Scholarship Fund. At the end of the year, one teacher will be selected the 1990 NFL Teacher of the Year, to be honored at the Pro Bowl in Honolulu, Hawaii.

"Mr. Douglas takes the time to treat every student as an individual, someone special," says Dilweg. "His concern helps all students believe they will succeed."

Rick Berken

Teachers and Students Saving the Rainforest

"We're losing 50 acres of tropical rain forest a minute," explains **Bruce Calhoun,** a biology teacher at Dodgeville High School in southwestern Wisconsin. "That translates into a half million trees every hour."

For Calhoun and two colleagues—Dodgeville science teachers Gari Walz and Jack Harrison—that also translates into action. In 1988 the three established Save the Rainforest, Inc., a national grassroots advocacy group made up solely of teachers and students.

The group started with a mass mailing to 32,000 biology teachers, inviting them to join efforts to stop deforestation. Barely two years later, Calhoun reports, the group has grown to involve 250,000 people at over 7,500 schools in the United States and has several important victories to its credit.

Save the Rainforest members have raised over $50,000. That money—along with contributions from other organizations in other countries—has purchased and so protected 40,000 acres of Costa Rican tropical rain forest. The group has established summer courses in Costa Rica and Belize for teachers and students interested in learning about the rain forest firsthand.

And, by writing letters and threatening consumer action, they've helped pressure Scott Paper into canceling plans to raze 2 million acres of rain forest in Indonesia.

"Because we're a school-based organization made up of educators and students, not professional environmentalists," says Calhoun (pictured here, right, with Texas NEA member Dan Patrick), Save the Rainforest has been influential with policy makers and effective in bringing new people into the environmental movement.

"We hope that through our efforts we can save what's left of the world's tropical rain forests," Calhoun adds. To help realize that dream, the group has begun efforts to create children's rain forest education centers around the world.

"We focus on rainforests," Calhoun notes, "but we're doing many things to help the environment close to home, too. You could say our work has a circular effect."

For teaching materials and resource lists, write to Save the Rainforest, Inc., c/o Dodgeville High School, 912 W. Chapel, Dodgeville, WI 53533.

Twelve Hours For Tyson

Gail Gardner

"That little boy will always be remembered for the way he brought this whole town together," says fifth grade teacher **Bill Colvin.** He is speaking of Tyson Stemp, who died in September of a brain tumor, and of Shaftsbury, Vermont, where Tyson was in Colvin's class last year.

Colvin, too, has earned a place in the town's history. One Saturday last June, less than two weeks after Tyson's tumor was discovered, Colvin ran and biked for 12 hours to raise money for Tyson's medical expenses—and to make sure the child had everything he wanted in the time he had left.

Others in the town of some 3,500 wanted to help, too. Businesses and individuals donated items for a tag sale and food sales. Children put up lemonade stands. Youngsters, including Tyson, rode their bikes beside Colvin as he ran. All day townspeople lined the town square, a one-mile course that Colvin circled (eight hours biking, four hours running) 183 times that day. At the end of the last lap, says Colvin, "half the town was there."

The financial goal was $2,000. The day's activities brought in more than $18,000.

But the best part of the day, says Colvin, was that Tyson was able to be there, strong enough to enjoy the festivities.

Burning Rubber In Cheyenne

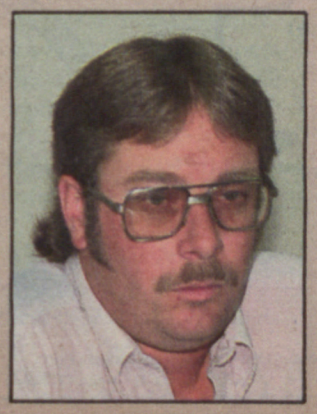
Maybe when drag racer **Ed White** of Cheyenne, Wyoming, finishes souping up his 1969 Dodge Charger, the car—shown here with White's son—will look much jazzier than this.

But for the time being, White, a maintenance worker with the Cheyenne school district and a member of NEA's ESP Standing Committee, keeps doing what all hot rodders do: tinkering with his engine to increase the car's horsepower.

"So-called 'top fuel' dragsters, the ones that use nitro-methane for fuel, can go from 0 to 280 miles an hour in 5 seconds," White explains.

Speed, of course, is the main point in drag racing. In the two-car, straight-line, quarter-mile elimination races, you do want to finish first. "But," cautions White, "you don't want to get there faster than your dial-in time [average fast time] for that track."

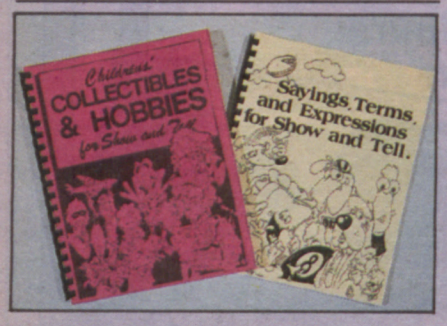
That's because a drag race is handicapped: in each elimination, the slower car gets the starting light a fraction of a second sooner than the faster one. Drag racing offers more than speed, noise, and the smell of burnt rubber: just as dear to hot rodders is the challenge to react fast—and right. Which might mean lifting your foot off the gas pedal so you don't finish too soon.



RESOURCES

Free or Inexpensive

ELEMENTARY



Children's Collectibles & Hobbies for Show and Tell and ***Sayings, Terms, and Expressions for Show and Tell.*** Marlene Glaus. Two activity books to help teachers organize show-and-tell time. 74 pp. and 62 pp. respectively. $8 each plus $1.50 p&h for one book, 50 cents for each additional book; add SASE for brochure. Marlene Glaus, #242, 4575 W. 80th Street Circle, Bloomington, MN 55437.

COMPETITION

Coaching Scholastic and Academic Games in Education. Joe Staggs. The coach of a winning Oklahoma quiz bowl team tells his trade secrets. 42 pp. $5. SAGE Enterprises, 856 S. Aspen, Suite 13, Broken Arrow, OK 74012.

Freed's Guide To Student Competitions and Publishing. Judith M. Freed. Lists more than 140 national contests for K-12 students—plus publishing options in 24 student magazines. 4th ed. 1990. 112 pp. $6.95 plus $1.75 p&h. (Add 6% sales tax in OH.) Fountainpen Press, Dept. 4-NE, 218 W. Fountain Ave., Delaware, OH 43015-1656.

MATHEMATICS

Thinking Through Mathematics. College Entrance Examination Board. Shows how to set up math problems kids can work out in a variety of thoughtful ways. 53 pp. $8.95 plus $2.95 p&h. College Board Publications, Box 886, New York, NY 10101-0886.

HEALTH

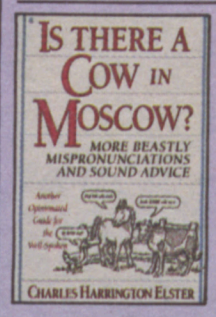
Great Meals, Great Snacks, Great Kids and ***Live Well, The Low-Fat/High-Fiber Way.*** Two books, offered at special prices to NEA members, give menus, recipes,

and other tips for lowering fat consumption for kids and families. Respectively 64 pp., $2.50; 44 pp., $3. Both books, $5. The American Health Foundation, 1 Dana Rd., Valhalla, NY 10595, Att: Publications.

POSTERS

"Butterfly Alphabet" and **"On the Wing."** Kjell B. Sandved, nature photographer. Color lithograph posters. Each shows the 26 letters of the alphabet and the numerals 0-9, photographed from natural patterns on the wings of butterflies. 18" x 24". "Butterfly Alphabet" is vertical; "On the Wing," horizontal. Order in any combination; photos do not repeat. One poster, $12; 2-7 posters, $9 each; 8 or more, $8 each. Add $4 per order UPS ($10 in AK, HI); 6.5% sales tax in DC. Kjell B. Sandved, P.O. Box 39138, Washington, DC 20016, or charge to credit card at 1-800-ABC-WING.

LANGUAGE

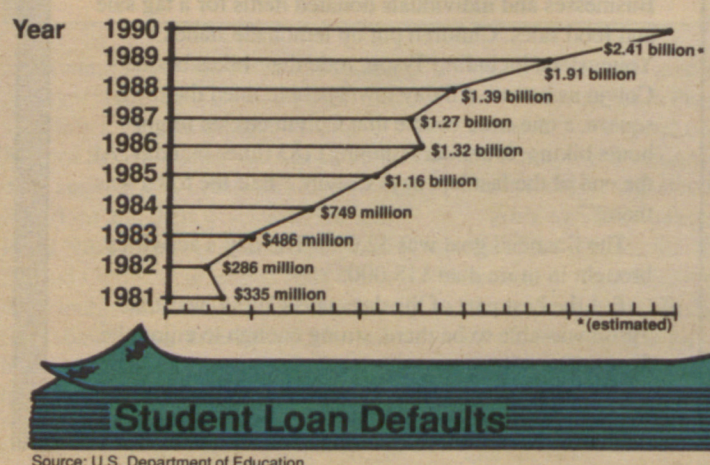


Is There a Cow in Moscow? Charles Harrington Elster. Sure, man, if you're talking about the one in Russia. This guide gives the standard pronunciation for *Moscow* and nearly 500 other words that are often mispronounced. 253 pp. $8.95 from booksellers or by telephone charge (you'll add variable p&h, sales tax) from Collier Macmillan, Trade Books Order Dept., 1-800-257-5755.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Special Educator and Job Stress. Charles V. L. Dedrick and Donna B. Raschke. Gives personal and organizational strategies for preventing or remedying stressful situations in special education. 80 pp. 3005-2-00-FF. $10.95. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516.

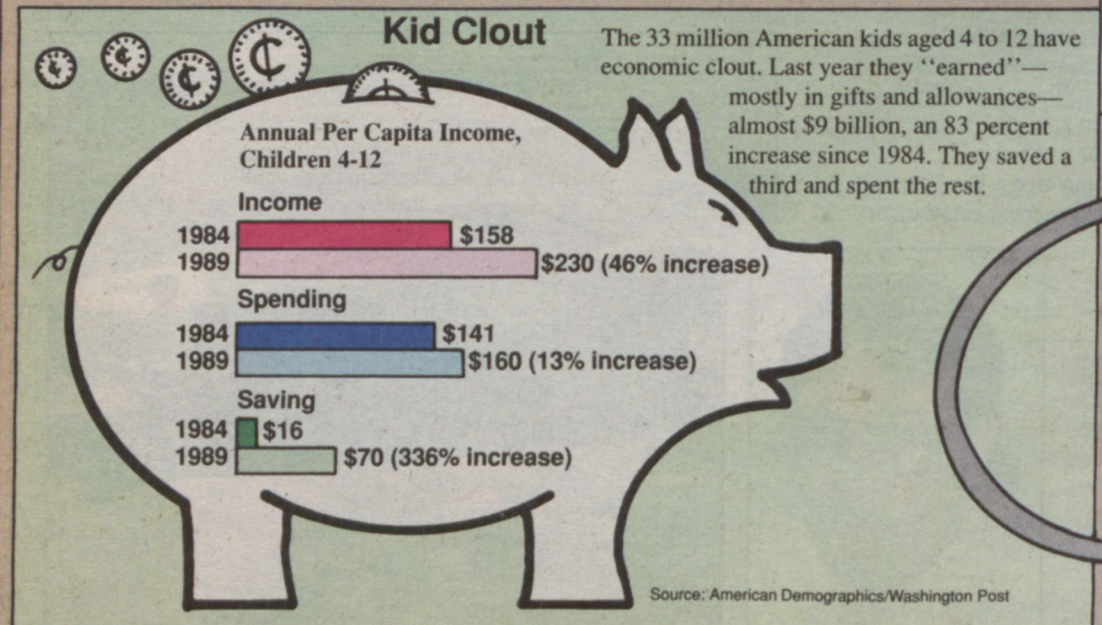
DATA BANK



Debt Burden

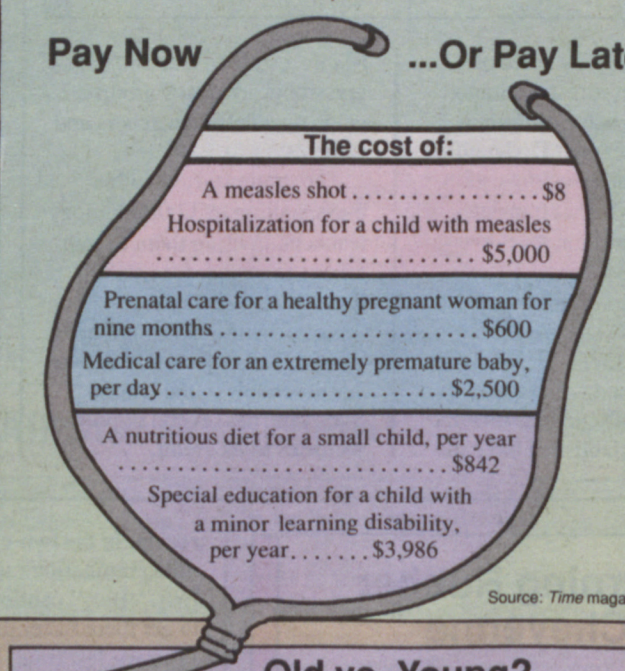
Student loan defaults have grown nearly as fast as the national debt. Since 1981, defaults have increased from $335 million to an estimated $2.4 billion.

Source: U.S. Department of Education

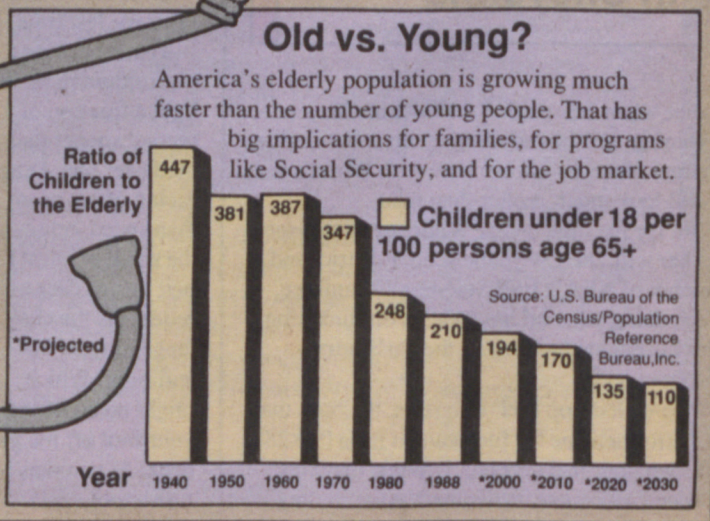


The 33 million American kids aged 4 to 12 have economic clout. Last year they "earned"—mostly in gifts and allowances—almost $9 billion, an 83 percent increase since 1984. They saved a third and spent the rest.

Source: American Demographics/Washington Post


Pay Now ...Or Pay Later
The cost of:
A measles shot $8
Hospitalization for a child with measles $5,000
Prenatal care for a healthy pregnant woman for nine months $600
Medical care for an extremely premature baby, per day $2,500
A nutritious diet for a small child, per year $842
Special education for a child with a minor learning disability, per year $3,986

Source: *Time* magazine


Old vs. Young?
America's elderly population is growing much faster than the number of young people. That has big implications for families, for programs like Social Security, and for the job market.
Ratio of Children to the Elderly
Children under 18 per 100 persons age 65+
447
381
387
347
248
210
194
170
135
110
*Projected
Year
1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1988 *2000 *2010 *2020 *2030
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census/Population Reference Bureau,Inc.

Health

Information about health factors that affect the way students learn.

Morris Green, M.D., is the Commissioner of Health for the state of Indiana. He is professor of pediatrics at Indiana University, Indianapolis, and also chair of the Council on Child and Adolescent Health for the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Q. How are physical and emotional health related?
A. Physical and emotional health are inseparable. Poor physical health leads to emotional problems like anger and depression. On the other hand, poor emotional health can lead to physical ills such as erratic eating habits, improper nutrition, or the use of drugs.

Q. What makes a child physically and emotionally "healthy?"
A. There are many factors that make up "health"—among them: physical endurance and vigor, a supportive social network and positive role models, the feeling that one is loved and valued by parents and others, social skills and one or more close friends, parents who protect their child at times of failure, the ability to form trusting relationships, expectations of success, the sense of responsibility for one's own health, family warmth and communication, and high self-esteem.

Q. Do studies show health and learning intertwined?
A. Learning is an aggressive act that requires a great deal of attention. A child who's not healthy finds it difficult to maintain attention and interest.

Q. Are kids healthier now than 10 or 20 years ago?
A. Some kids are healthier; but poor, inner-city children aren't. This "unhealthiness" shows up in various statistics: the problems of sexually-transmitted diseases, drugs, teen pregnancy, emotional disorders like depression, anorexia, teen suicide, auto accidents, and driving under the influence of alcohol.

Q. How can a child's learning be affected when a child is unhealthy?
A. For a child to learn effectively, he or she has to be in excellent physical shape. If the child has an ailment like asthma, which causes the greatest number of missed school days, his or her ability to learn is greatly hampered.

Other health factors that can interfere with learning are hearing, vision or speech problems; emotional problems; and mental retardation.

Q. Are learning disabilities connected to health factors?
A. Some children have risk factors that may make them more likely to have learning disabilities. These include low birth weight, stress before or after birth, treatment for leukemia and other cancers, infections of the central nervous system, and severe head injuries.

Q. Does self-image play a part in engaging in positive health behaviors?
A. There is increasing evidence that population groups with low self-esteem and low self-confidence are less motivated to take care of their health. They make not take preventive measures and follow prescribed medical regimens.

Q. How do physical and "mental" checkups interrelate?
A. The health supervision of children should reflect their physical as well as psychological and social development. During the school years, children become able to make decisions that influence their health. Lifelong patterns of health behavior often begin in childhood. By actively involving themselves in their own health care, children can achieve responsibility and control over their behaviors.

Q. How can the family's emotional climate influence school-children?
A. The emotional climate of the family strongly influences the child's response in school. Disciplinary problems, poor school work, attention-getting behavior, and refusal to participate in classroom activities all may indicate stresses at home.

Q. How can family stress manifest itself physically?
A. In schoolchildren, examples include resurgence of infantile behaviors such as thumb sucking or bed wetting, which may indicate evidence of poor coping with stress. Learning problems also could occur.

Q. How can teachers promote good health to students?
A. Teachers can emphasize good health habits such as nutrition, dental care, proper sleep, and injury prevention, and they can explain the dangers of smoking, drinking, and drug use.

Q. Do you think our children will be healthier and better-educated in the future?
A. I hope they will, but a lot depends on our political leaders investing in health and educational services. There needs to be an improvement in access to medical care, preventive health services, and health promotion.

Fit, Not Fat

NEA member Lenny Saunders is doing his part—and more—to call kids' attention to fitness. His 1990 version of project A.C.E.S.(American Children Exercising Simultaneously) drew the participation of more than 2 million kids, from the U.S. and foreign countries, too. The kids, who exercised at the same time, on the same day, represented nearly 5,600 schools.

Next year's celebration of fitness will be on May 8.

To sign up, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Lenny Saunders, Project A.C.E.S., Valley View Elementary School, Montville, NJ 07045.

Saunders will put your school on his fitness roster—and he'll also send you a list of ideas for observing the fitness project

A Joint Effort

The National PTA and GTE have joined forces to launch *Common Sense*, a project to discourage drug and alcohol abuse through early education. The project's geared to parents of third through sixth graders. The PTA/GTE effort is offered to the National PTA's units nationwide. For details, call 1-800-225-5483.

BOOK BEAT

Art Books: Never More, Never Better

To sharpen the visual and aesthetic perceptions of the kids in your life, give them art books to see with.

First Words
Ivan and Jane Clark Chermayeff
Abrams. 32 pp. $16.95.

Why take your five-year-old along when you're visiting the museums of Paris? For the authors of *First Words*, surely one reason is that art is the family profession. Ivan Chermayeff is an eminent graphic designer; Jane Clark Chermayeff, a museum educator.

But there's another reason: a five-year-old in the museums of Paris can have a first lesson in "seeing the same things differently," as artists do. Hence young Sam's assignment: search the works of art for examples of favorite subjects—cats and dogs, boats and boys.

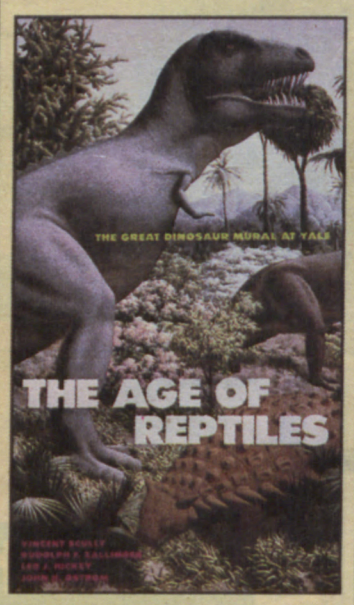
First Words presents the fruits of Sam's search in 13 handsome two-page spreads (facing pages designed together). From the spread devoted to "eyes," the Mona Lisa's surprisingly recognizable eyes gaze at you as if through a mail slot.

The Glorious Impossible
By Madeleine L'Engle
Illustrated with frescoes by Giotto
Simon & Schuster. 60 pp. $19.95.

The Glorious Impossible, Madeleine L'Engle's 1990 book, is primarily a religious book, telling the life of Jesus Christ—the "glorious impossible" of the title—in words and paintings.

The words are L'Engle's; the paintings are frescoes by the 14th-century Italian painter, Giotto, newly restored on the walls of the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, Italy. But any book that shows the work of Giotto is a work of art history. For Giotto was a key innovator in European painting—the first painter since classical Roman times to create three-dimensional "physically believable bodies," according to an afterword by art historian A. Richard Turner.

The Great Dinosaur Mural at Yale: The Age of Reptiles
By Vincent Scully, Rudolph F. Zallinger, Leo J. Hickey, and John H. Ostrom



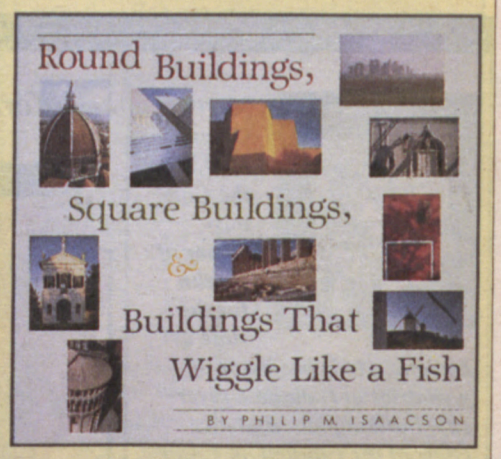
Abrams. 48 pp. plus 12-page accordion pullout. $19.95.

Unlikely as it may seem, there's a very definite connection between the religious figures in Giotto's frescoes and the dinosaurs in *The Great Dinosaur Mural at Yale: The Age of Reptiles*.

Giotto's figures and the dinosaurs not only were painted in the same medium—fresco—they were painted in the same style, with the same regard for "shapes sculpturally distinct, with clear linear edges and smooth surface planes." So says art historian Vincent Scully.

The reason: at the time young Rudolph Zollinger painted the dinosaur mural—1943-47—Yale was one of the few art schools where the techniques Giotto used were still being taught!

Sophisticated readers will enjoy the text by Scully, Zollinger, and the scientists Hickey and Ostrom. Everyone will enjoy the five-foot pullout that reproduces Zollinger's 110-foot-long mural of 300 million years of dinosaur development.



Round Buildings, Square Buildings, & Buildings That Wiggle Like a Fish
Philip M. Isaacson
Knopf. 121 pp. $10.95 (paperback).

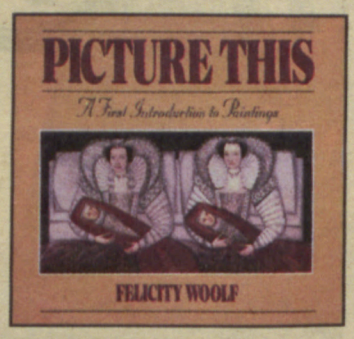
Whatever they're about, Philip Isaacson's 90-odd photographs seem to show their architectural subjects at their most spectacular. For instance, Manhattan's Flatiron Building appears to have undulating walls that "wiggle like a fish."

Isaacson's text tells a lot about buildings, their materials, their techniques, in few words. Adults may decide not to give the book to a child and keep it instead.

The Art of Construction
Mario Salvadori
Chicago Review Press. 149 pp. $9.95 (paperback).

How to put buildings up and keep them up is the subject of Mario Salvadori's book *The Art of Construction*. The Columbia University professor emeritus of architecture and engineering designed the book for sophisticated children age 10 and up. It tells "how stadiums and bridges are built and how you can build some lovely small models [with] nothing but paper, strings, ice-cream sticks, glue, and pins."

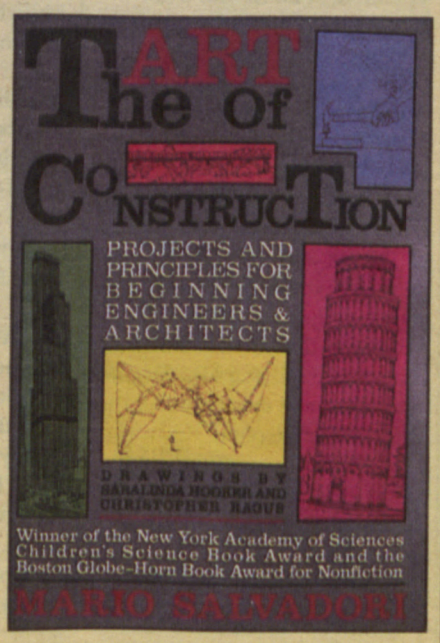
—Nancy R. Needham
Book Review Editor



Picture This: A First Introduction to Paintings
By Felicity Woolf
Doubleday. 40 pp. $14.95.

Felicity Woolf, an educator with museums in London and Dublin, provides a quick lesson for youngish children (10-and-up) in the history of painting, through her comments on color reproductions of 24 paintings done in Europe or North America between 1400 and 1950.

Woolf defines terms like *foreground* and *medium*. And she's good at the nuts and bolts of painting: at mixing colors, explaining what one paints *on*.


The ART of CONSTRUCTION
PROJECTS AND PRINCIPLES FOR BEGINNING ENGINEERS & ARCHITECTS
DRAWINGS BY SARALINDA HOOKER AND CHRISTOPHER RAGUS
Winner of the New York Academy of Sciences Children's Science Book Award and the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for Nonfiction
MARIO SALVADORI

Kids' Current Favorites

1. *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White.
2. *Superfudge* by Judy Blume.
3. *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls.
4. *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* by Judy Blume.
   Honey I Shrunk the Kids by B. Hiller and E. Faucher.
5. *Indian in the Cupboard* by Lynne Banks.
   Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl.
6. *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl.
   There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom by Louis Sachar.
7. *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein.
   Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell.
8. *The Big Friendly Giant* by Roald Dahl.

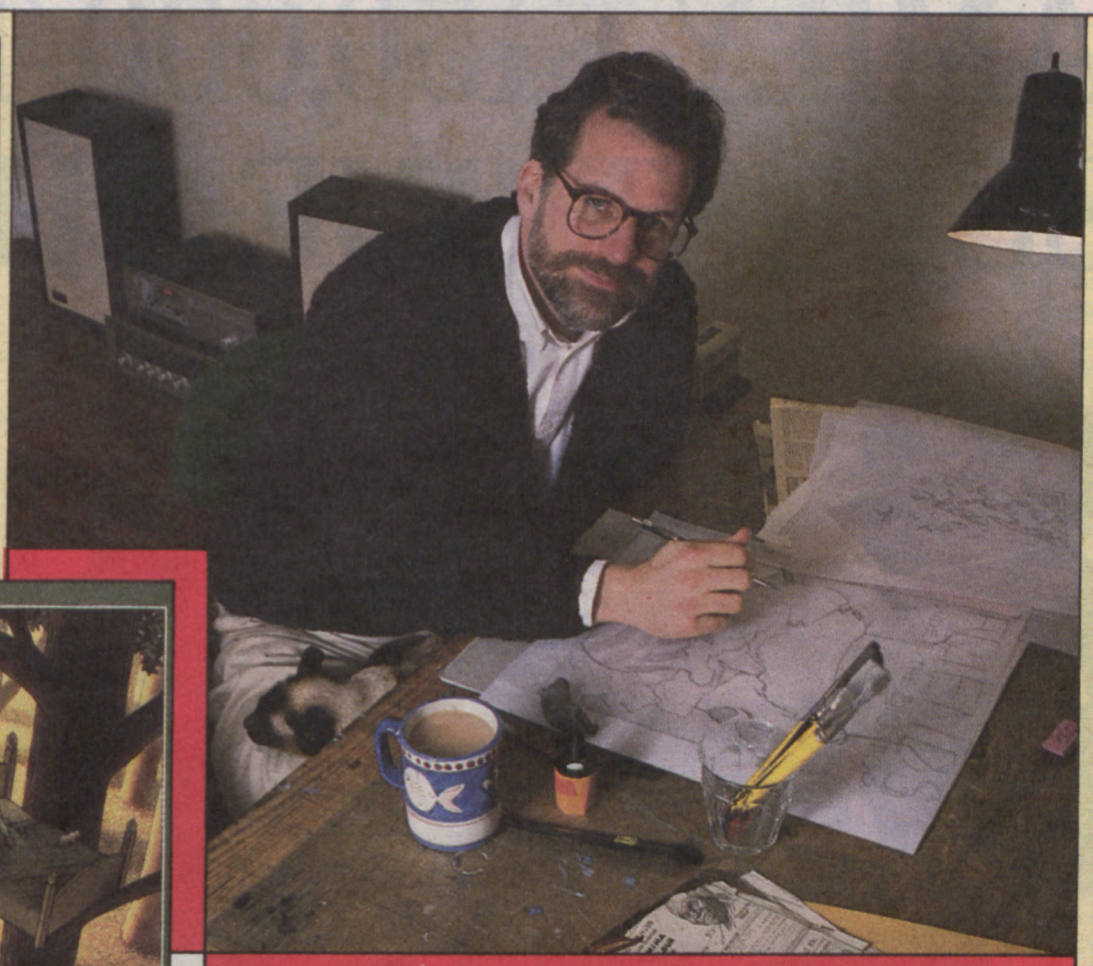
Source: Reading Is Fundamental; based on a survey of 300,000 children in the RIF network.

Kids' All-Time Favorites—In Paperback

1. *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton. Dell/Laurel Leaf, 1968. 5,855,085.
2. *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* by Judy Blume. Dell/Yearling and Laurel-Leaf, 1974. 5,278,412.
3. *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White. Harper Trophy, 1973. 4,607,131.
4. *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* by Judy Blume. Dell/Yearling, 1976. 4,582,039.
5. *Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Harper Trophy, 1971. 3,803,209.
6. *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. HBJ, 1968. 3,667,861.
7. *Little House in the Big Woods* by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Harper Trophy, 1971. 3,495,079.
8. *That Was Then, This Is Now* by S. E. Hinton, Dell/Laurel-Leaf, 1972. 3,351,194.
9. *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls. Bantam, 1974. 3,347,000.
10. *Superfudge* by Judy Blume. Dell/Yearling, 1981. 3,243,442.

Source: Publishers Weekly; sales figures apply to period from date of paperback edition indicated through 1988.

Meet:



Houghton Mifflin

Keeping the Magic Alive

Chris Van Allsburg is one of the nation's leading writer/illustrators of children's picture books.

***Since publishing his first book,* The Garden of Abdul Gasazi, *in 1979, Van Allsburg has written and illustrated a new children's book almost every year. Two have won Caldecott Medals:* Jumanji *(1981) and* The Polar Express *(1985). Last year, Van Allsburg did color illustrations to accompany Mark Helprin's text for* Swan Lake. *This year, Van Allsburg shifted gears—writing and illustrating* Just a Dream, *a warning tale about environmental pollution.* Just a Dream *is published by Houghton Mifflin as are Van Allsburg's earlier books.* NEA Today *staff writer Nancy Needham recently talked to Van Allsburg about his work.*

Where do you get your ideas?
A story starts with a picture in my mind.

Abdul Gasazi, my first book, is about a dog that gets lost in a topiary garden where the shrubs are pruned to look like animals.

I saw in my mind a white dog. I asked, where did that dog come from? He ran from a boy. The boy's name? Alan. Is it his dog? No, it's somebody else's, and now the boy is in trouble.

I ask questions about the first idea, and when I answer them, the story comes.

The white dog looks like TV's Spuds McKenzie. Which came first?
The dog is Fritz and he came before Spuds. Fritz appears in many of my other books, too. Not always as a live character: once he was a toy dog on wheels. He's a game for me.

Is Fritz your dog?
No, I always wanted a dog like that, but instead of getting one, I got a friend to buy one.

Do you have kids or consult with kids about ideas for your books?
I don't have kids, and I don't consult kids about what I draw. That would be doing market research. An artist should be writing or drawing pictures important to him or her—not finding out what the market will buy.

If I asked kids what they'd like to see in a book, I might find out that they would rather see ponies with bright manes than rhinos in living rooms. But I want to draw a rhino in a living room. [He did, in *Jumanji*.] I hope kids like what I draw, but if they don't....

A book could be about anything, then?
I usually get ideas when I'm bored. If I have nothing to do, an idea comes. With *Just a Dream* it was different. I started with the idea of getting kids concerned about pollution.

The environment is an honest anxiety of mine. One way to deal with an anxiety is to make something useful out of it.

The hard thing when you're writing about real things—like pollution—as opposed to fiction, is to write a good story.

My solution in *Just a Dream*: to have the boy, Walter, go places in his bed. Bed, with the covers up, is supposed to be a safe place. But it's not safe to be in bed in a garbage dump.

You often put characters in conveyances that float above the action, like Walter's bed or the sailboat in *The Wreck of the Zephyr*.

Putting myself as artist around in different vantage points is calculated on my part. It lets me—and eventually people looking at the picture—end up witnessing events from places we would never be if we were there as living persons.

I grew up watching TV and movies—with their boom shots and crane shots—so I quite naturally think of moving the point of view around for variety, dramatic effect, and to emphasize scale—mostly through perspective.

How do you mean *scale*?
In *Just a Dream*, the scenes of Walter's waking hours are drawn in normal scale and on a single page.

The dream sequence—when Walter travels on his bed—consists of eight two-page spreads. The scale is huge: in one picture Walter's little bed perches on the lip of a belching smokestack. The effect I wanted was for people confronting those spreads to see and have seen the big picture.

What's the source of the images for the town at the North Pole in *Polar Express*?
Old New England mill towns, like Fall River and Providence. The North Pole is an architectural hodge-podge, like New England.

I rejected the idea of a chalet with 12 little guys in red suits. I like fantasy that grows out of a logic or rationale.

Do children believe your fantasies are true? That Harris Burdick [in *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*] really did leave drawings with his publisher and then disappear?
When kids ask whether the introduction to *Harris Burdick* is true, I say: Oh, it's true...it's pretty true. I hate telling kids that *Harris Burdick* is made up. I want to make the book an artifact, a weird thing.

To tell them the truth defeats the premise of the book: that you can believe something happened because you have the evidence—Harris Burdick's pictures, or, in *Polar Express*, the bell from Santa Claus's sleigh.

Did you believe in Santa Claus?
I believed in Santa Claus hook, line, and sinker. I would like kids to believe the magic of *Polar Express* is a reality. I can't think of any anticipation as potent as the pure anticipation I felt as a child on Christmas Eve who believed in the reality of Santa Claus.

It's not just the gifts. It's that someone arrives at your house, walks on your roof, eats the cookies you put out. There's evidence that he's been there.

Do you know how teachers use your books?
Yes, from the mail my publisher gets from kids. Among teachers and librarians, the conventional assumption is there's an age to stop using picture books. But some use my books with older kids. With *Harris Burdick*, I get mail even from 9th graders.

It's interesting to see how the subjects kids write about differ at different ages.

Second graders' ideas are greater than their vocabulary. Their writing is really surreal because their words only approximate what they mean to say.

In fourth or fifth grade, there's a similarity between plot development and TV plots.

In ninth grade it's heartening to see the writing become more original again. I don't know whether the skills of the teachers are having effect or whether kids are developing more skills.

What will your next book be about?
My next book will be in sepia and charcoal—a narrow palette. It's at an outline stage—I'm still doing doodles. If I told you what I was thinking, I would probably change it.

Will you ever try picture books for adults?
If I did, bookstores and libraries would still shelve them in the children's section, and people would criticize me for "going too far."

TODAY, IT COSTS A FAMILY $150,000* TO RAISE JUST ONE CHILD.

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*Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture; USDA Estimates of the Cost of Raising a Child, June 1989
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PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Virginia teacher Laurice Slaughter and her daughter, Jonnice.

Paul Aiken

GOING IT ALONE

Everything seems harder when there's just one parent to pull all the weight financially. But this Virginia teacher is doing a good job of managing her resources.

Laurice Slaughter believes that setting goals—both personal and financial—is the best way to achieve what she wants in life. As she meets each goal, she sets another. By adding a large measure of discipline, plenty of hard work, and a healthy dose of common sense, she's created a good recipe for financial success.

When Slaughter bought her first home, a starter townhouse, for $32,000 in 1979, she planned to move within five years. In 1983, on schedule, she sold the townhouse for $42,000—making a tidy profit—and bought a detached single-family home in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where she teaches ninth-grade algebra at Plaza Junior High.

Slaughter thought $72,000 was a fair price for her second home. But she didn't feel that way about the 13 percent interest rate the lending institutions were charging. So she worked out a deal to assume the seller's mortgage at 9 1/4 percent. Slaughter figures this strategy saved her about $70 a month; her monthly mortgage payment is a workable $560.

Slaughter says the banker who helped her with the mortgage was pretty impressed: "He seemed to be amazed that as a single parent I could do as well as I did." She hasn't done badly since then, either. She just completed her master's degree in education, which will give her salary a boost. And she's set up a sideline business as a Mary Kay cosmetics consultant to earn some extra income for the next things she plans to tackle.

Today, Slaughter, who is 42, has two major financial goals: She wants to educate her daughter, Jonnice, who just turned 15 and wants to be a pediatrician. She also wants to buy a new house, in a nicer neighborhood, where she plans to settle for keeps.

"I said at one time that I wanted to be in a new house in 1992," she says. "But I'm also realizing that that's when my daughter will be getting ready to go to college." Besides, in Virginia Beach as in many other parts of the country, the real estate market is soft. Until it improves, Slaughter knows, she'll be wiser not to sell. The new house may have to wait.

So Slaughter has a third goal, which will help her meet the other two. She wants to set up a regular savings plan. She feels she should have three to six months' savings in a liquid account for emergencies, but she just can't seem to get there. And although she has some certificates of deposit, she doesn't feel she has enough money available to start an investment program.

All Slaughter's able to manage at present is to have deductions made from her paycheck for a 403 (b) annuity and for an account that she calls a "bill drawer"—money for regular annual needs like car insurance and for unexpected expenses. After these deductions, the paycheck is deposited directly into her interest-bearing checking account.

"There was a time when I could save $4,000 or $5,000 a year," she says. "But for the past five years, I haven't been able to really save. I put the money in, then things come up and I have to run in and snatch everything out."

Last year, for example, Slaughter had to put a new roof on her house, and that wiped out her savings. For real emergencies, though, she's got the $4,000 line of credit on her Discover card.

Slaughter has looked carefully at all the ways she spends money to see where she can save. For example, Jonnice wears size 1 dresses. Those are hard to find—and expensive. So Slaughter makes many of her daughter's clothes.

"I let her pick out her patterns and her fabrics," Slaughter says. "In the summertime, especially, I make shorts and tops." But she also made her daughter's prom gown last year.

One of Slaughter's biggest expense areas is health insurance and unreimbursed medical charges. Slaughter is covered by a group Blue Cross/Blue Shield policy at school, but she buys coverage for Jonnice—and next month the cost of that coverage will nearly double.

"I was paying $56 a pay period, and now I'll be paying $100," Slaughter says. Besides the premiums, Slaughter has to handle a $200 annual deductible per person and pay 25 percent of covered costs.

Slaughter did look into joining a health maintenance organization, which has lower premiums and requires less out-of-pocket outlay for covered expenses. But both she and her daughter have some special medical problems that the HMO wouldn't cover. For example, Slaughter suffers from temporo-mandibular joint disorder, or TMJ, as well as arthritis in her face.

"I need to have more surgery done for that," she says. "But the HMO considered it a dental problem." The HMO doesn't cover dental work.

There are some places Slaughter isn't even interested in cutting corners. She tithes to the Lynnhaven Baptist Church. And, like most single parents, she doesn't want to scrimp too much on her daughter's school activities and teenage pleasures. Last summer Slaughter didn't feel she could afford to take a vacation, but she sent Jonnice to Disney World. She also sends her to a dance class. And the two of them attend all the school sporting events.

Still, Slaughter sees two ways she can set up a regular savings plan. She figures that, even with reimbursements, graduate school has been costing her nearly $1,000 a year for the past five years. Now she's finished, maybe she can put that extra money away. The best way might be to set up a separate account at the credit union and have a set amount deducted from her check each month.

Another possibility is Slaughter's Mary Kay consulting business. Now that graduate school is over, she hopes to be able to conduct about four classes a month. That means holding a skin care and beauty session for a group of women at someone's home and selling Mary Kay products to those who attend.

Slaughter figures she can net $100 a month from these classes. That, too, could go into a special "do-not-touch" savings account. Altogether, she might be able to put aside $200 a month, or $2,400 a year—a good start on meeting her next two goals.

—Mary Rowland

Next month: Paying for college.

Annual expenditures

Annual income: $40,500

Mortgage (includes taxes and insurance	$6,720
Federal tax	4,300
Social Security	3,000
Church	4,000
Groceries	2,000
403 (b) annuity	1,500
Savings	2,250
Jonnice's dance class	350
Jonnice's spending money	1,270
Entertainment	2,600
Life insurance/annuity plan	600
Vacation	1,600
Car loan	3,240
Car insurance	300
Utilities	2,160
Phone	360
Clothes	2,000
Medical bills & insurance	2,250

RESEARCH CLUES

Getting to the Sources

What are the main obstacles that get in the way of effective teaching? What are the key things teachers need to help them do their jobs? What needs to happen to help achieve the national goals announced by President Bush last spring?

To get the answers to these and other questions, the Gallup organization surveyed the 231 semifinalists in the Thanks to Teachers competition. The poll was conducted for NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, and sponsored by Apple Computer.

All the teachers were honored for their excellence in teaching and their partnership activities within and outside their schools.

Below: a sampling of the poll results.

There are a number of different things that get in the way of effective teaching. How much of a barrier to your ability to teach at full capacity is each of the following—a major barrier, a minor barrier, or not a barrier at all?

	Major Barrier	Minor Barrier	Not a Barrier
a. Discipline problems in your classroom	10%	54%	36%
b. Too many children in your classes	33	38	29
c. Non-teaching duties such as lunchroom duty, study halls etc.	20	39	41
d. Administrative bureaucracy	29	46	25
e. Not having enough time to prepare for classes	39	43	18
f. Not being allowed to design your own courses and pick your own curriculum	11	38	51
g. Lack of parental involvement	25	48	27
h. Insufficient funds for supplies and materials	40	38	22
i. Lack of technology equipment	28	44	28
j. Lack of technology training	22	49	29
k. Standardized tests for students	19	40	39

How much would each of the following help you do your job—a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or not all?

	Great Deal	Fair Amount	Only a Little	Not At All
a. Your own phone at school	52%	18%	13%	17%
b. Access to a copying machine	83	11	2	4
c. Your own computer	86	10	3	1
d. Your own office	44	21	13	22
e. A TV and VCR in your classroom	51	29	12	8
f. A small budget for supplies	66	17	8	8
g. Release time	70	23	3	3
h. Meeting with other teachers and colleagues	84	14	1	1
i. Attending professional conferences	79	20	1	*
j. More support staff to help with clerical duties	73	21	5	1
k. Access to a fax machine	19	26	28	26

Please tell me how necessary you think each of the following is for achieving the goals the President has set out. Is each item essential if the goals are to be met, helpful but not essential, or not necessary at all?

	Essential	Helpful	Not Necessary
a. More school personnel	60%	35%	4%
b. More money	78	20	2
c. Higher teacher expectations	75	22	2
d. Higher parental or societal expectations	84	14	1
e. More educational research	34	51	15
f. More technology	52	42	6
g. More school/community partnerships	84	16	*
h. More business/school partnerships	74	26	*
i. More testing	4	38	58
j. Better curriculum materials	58	38	4
k. Better teachers	69	24	7
l. Peer review of teachers	39	48	13
m. Better teacher education	68	26	6
n. More professional development for teachers	75	22	3
o. Greater teacher ownership of what they do, such as budgets and curriculum	75	23	2

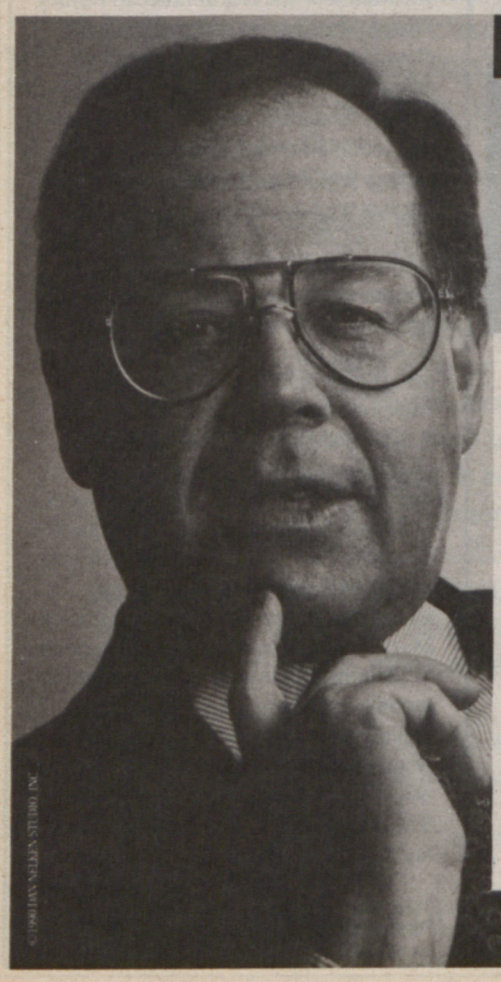
Identifying Gifted Students

If you've ever participated in the identification of gifted students and know of nontraditional procedures or unpublished instruments that have been successful in identifying them, the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented would like to hear from you.

The Center hopes to establish a National Repository that would provide a listing and evaluation of unpublished instruments used to identify gifted students. The Repository would also evaluate programs for the gifted.

Please send your information, any copies of evaluation documents or instruments you may have, and the name and number of a contact person, to National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, Curry School of Education, 405 Emmet St., University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22903. (The Center is funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Dept. of Education.)

The Center will give credit to the source and author of any instrument used in its publications and will maintain complete confidentiality of evaluation findings. For further information, call 804-982-2849.



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Meet Pace Professor, Lawrence Roder.

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Dr. Lawrence Roder has been a chairperson in the Pace School of Education for six years. In his 34-year career, he has held a host of teaching and executive positions ranging from superintendant to principal to teacher.

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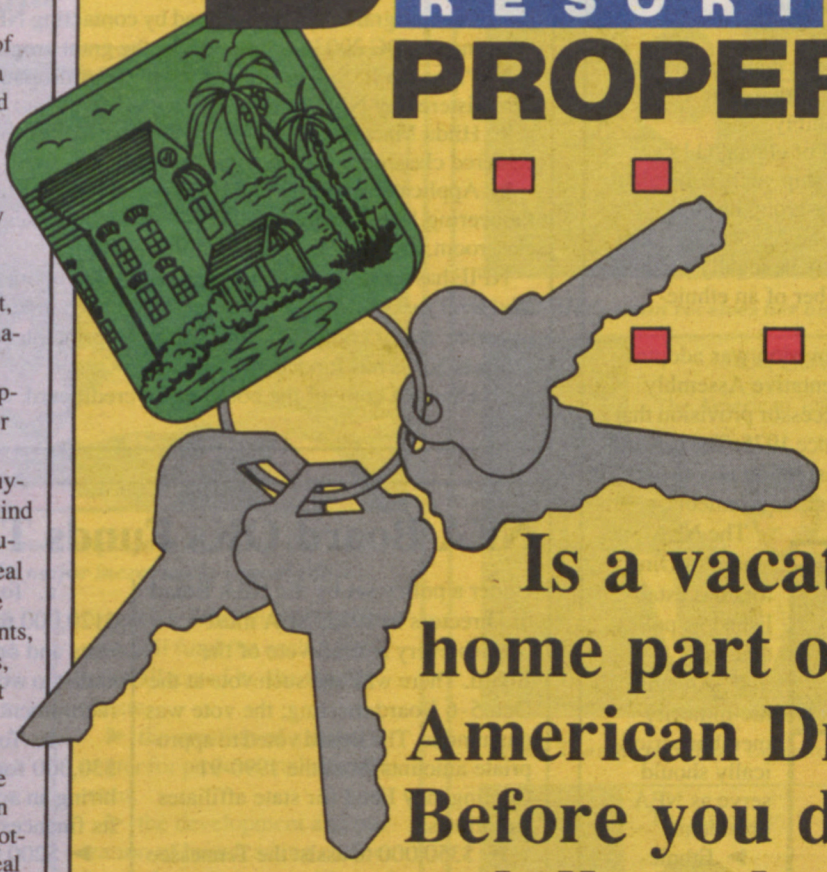
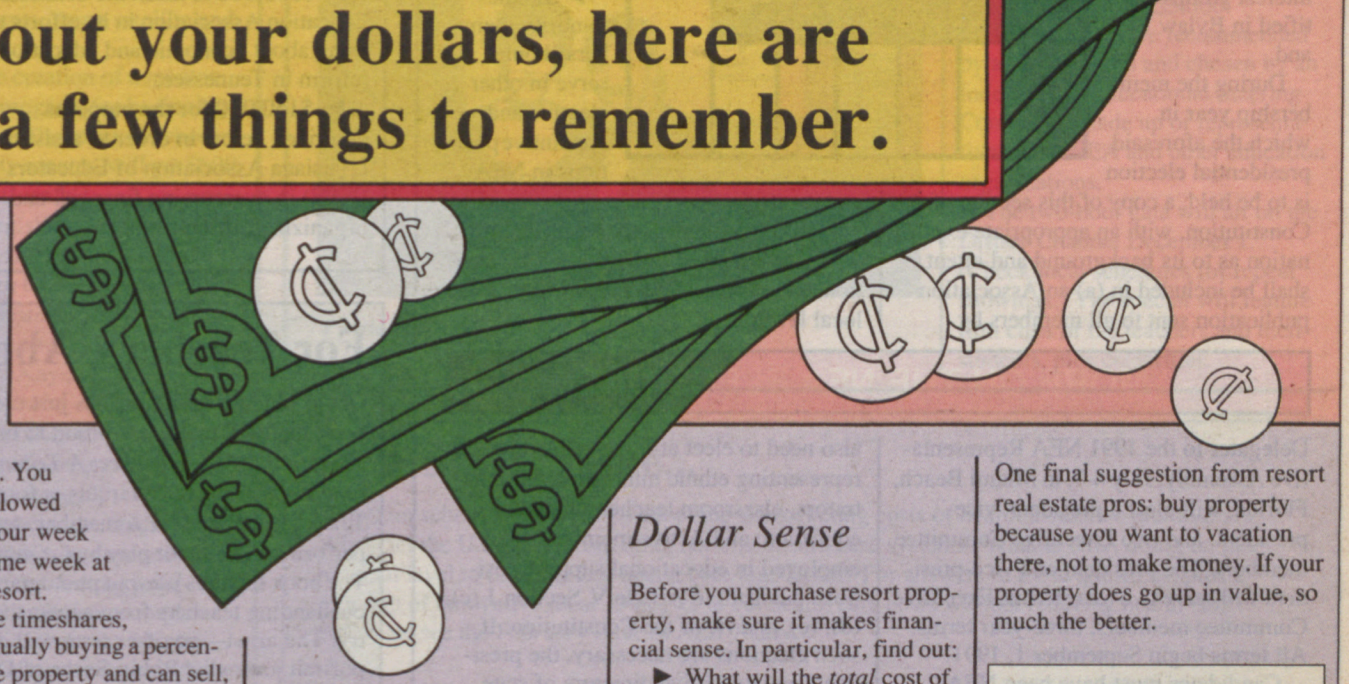


Is a vacation home part of your American Dream? Before you dole out your dollars, here are a few things to remember.



Whether at the beach, on the slopes, or in the mountains, a vacation home is high on many wish lists.

Research shows that people aged 45 to 60 buy the most vacation property. Two out of three people today consider a second home part of the good life.

The reason? Most people dream of the vacation home not only as a place for family retreats but as an investment that can produce rental income. And, after retirement, the home can become a permanent or semi-permanent residence. Finally, the resort property can be sold for a profit or passed on to heirs.

If you're thinking about buying resort property, keep in mind that few vacation homes actually live up to The Dream. Real estate experts warn that some properties are good investments, some are good vacation spots, and some are good retirement homes, but rarely do you find one that is all three.

As Baby Boomers enter the prime age for buying vacation property, developers are promoting a wide variety of resort real estate deals, many of them costing under $10,000.

Besides the traditional single-family unit, you can now choose from timeshares, equity clubs, undivided interests, condominium-hotels, and others.

The first step in buying vacation property is deciding why you want it. If you plan to rent out the property, for instance, you'll need extras like pools, tennis courts, golf courses, or ski slopes to attract renters. But if you plan to live there yourself, you may not appreciate the cost of maintaining those facilities, or the constant coming and going of renters. When considering amenities, don't buy promises. Make sure roads, utilities, and leisure facilities are already in place. Find out who will own them, and how much they will cost to maintain.

Always check out the property manager's reputation. An experienced management company with good references is essential to maintain property value.

Timeshares

Timesharing, or "fractional ownership," divides the use of a resort property into time intervals—often a week—so that as many as 52 people can "own" it.

For a one-time charge, now averaging about $8,500, you reserve the same time period each year. You may be allowed to trade your week for the same week at another resort.

In some timeshares, you're actually buying a percentage of the property and can sell, will, rent, loan, or transfer your share. In others, you're only leasing the property for a specified period.

About $2 billion in timeshares were sold in 1989, ten times more than a decade earlier.

As investments, timeshares have a poor track record. Up to half of the timeshare's cost could represent marketing expenses, not real estate value. Plus, it has proven difficult to match buyers and sellers for particular weeks.

Still, many timeshare buyers are satisfied with their purchase. Over time, they're spending less than if they'd paid annually for vacation lodging that rose steadily in price. One study suggests that the typical timeshare begins to pay off after seven years—even if there is no resale. If you don't mind taking your vacation at the same place and at the same time each year, timeshares can make sense.

But if you don't want to be tied down, you could open a savings account with the money a timeshare would cost, and pay for annual vacations with the interest.

This strategy gives you more flexibility and preserves your capital, although you should consider the effects of inflation and income taxes on your earnings.

Dollar Sense

Before you purchase resort property, make sure it makes financial sense. In particular, find out:

- What will the *total* cost of your vacation be? In addition to the mortgage payment, factor in any monthly fees for maintenance, transportation, and meals. Can you afford to go every year?
- What are the tax implications? Will you be able to deduct any interest, property taxes, depreciation, or maintenance? What happens to the capital gains on your home if you sell it and retire to your vacation home? If you plan to rent your property, you may want the advice of a tax expert, since the rules for rental properties are complex.
- If you are buying a timeshare, is there an exchange network or a fee for swapping?

One final suggestion from resort real estate pros: buy property because you want to vacation there, not to make money. If your property does go up in value, so much the better.

Join NEA-R

Membership in NEA-R is open to active members through the pre-retired lifetime program. Once retired, if not a member of NEA-R, dues are $10 annually. In 41 states, NEA-R and the state Retired affiliate are unified. That is, membership in both groups is necessary.

For more information, contact your state affiliate or write to NEA-Retired, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Please note: NEA active life membership does ***not*** *include membership in NEA-R.*

Your NEA

SPECIAL NOTICE:

NEA Electoral Process

The 1991 NEA Representative Assembly will elect an NEA president for a two-year term of office to begin September 1, 1991.

Article IV, Section 4, of the NEA Constitution, Affirmative Action Procedure, requires that all Association members receive information about that provision and the electoral process prior to every presidential election.

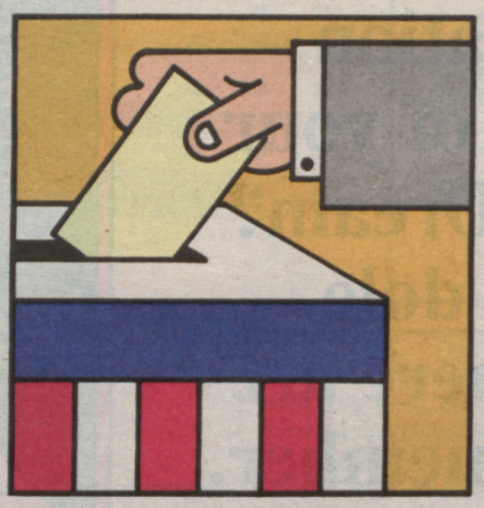
The language of Article IV, Section 4, is as follows:

By December 1 of each membership year immediately preceding the next membership year in which a presidential election is to be held (i.e., approximately 18 months prior to the date of the election), appropriate information about the office of president and the electoral process, including all relevant time lines, shall be sent to each of the ethnic-minority special interest groups identified in Bylaw 12; and

During the membership year in which the aforesaid presidential election is to be held, a copy of this section of the Constitution, with an appropriate explanation as to its background and intent, shall be included in (a) an Association publication sent to all members by December 1 and (b) the material that is sent to the delegates to that year's Representative Assembly.

If after any period of eleven (11) consecutive membership years a member of an ethnic-minority group has not served as president, the Association shall take such steps as may be legally permissible to elect a member of an ethnic-minority group.

The foregoing provision was adopted by the 1988 Representative Assembly and replaced a predecessor provision that had been in effect since 1975. The current provision of the Constitution is consistent with all relevant legal requirements.



The NEA Board of Directors has established as policy that—

► An ethnic-minority member periodically should serve as NEA president.

► Ethnic-minority members should serve in other elective and appointive positions in NEA and its affiliates.

► Ethnic-minority members should participate fully in all aspects of Association operation at the national, state, and local levels.

MORE ON THE NEA ELECTIONS

Delegates to the 1991 NEA Representative Assembly, July 4-7, in Miami Beach, Florida, will elect a president, vice-president, and two Executive Committee members. The president and vice-president will serve two-year terms, Executive Committee members, three-year terms. All terms begin September 1, 1991.

Candidates must have been NEA Active members for two years immediately preceding the election.

The May/June issue of *NEA Today* will carry the photo and candidate statement of anyone filing for office and submitting a statement by April 1. Submission of filing forms does not constitute nomination for office.

The Representative Assembly may also need to elect at-large NEA directors representing ethnic minorities, administrators, classroom teachers in higher education, and Active members employed in educational support positions pursuant to Article V, Section 1 (c), (d), (e), and (f) of the Constitution. If such elections are necessary, the presidents and executive directors of state affiliates, the Board of Directors and Executive Committee, and the NEA Committee on Minority Affairs will be notified in June.

Filing forms and election information, including the campaign regulations for candidates for NEA office, are available from the NEA Executive Office, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington DC 20036.

Life Members: Request *Proceedings*

The *Proceedings of the 1990 Representative Assembly* will be mailed in early 1991 to any NEA life member who requests a copy.

To get your copy of the *Proceedings*, simply clip your mailing label from the front of *NEA Today* and send it with your request to NEA Membership Records, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

NEA Foundation Sets Guidelines

Guidelines for the following National Foundation for the Improvement of Education programs can be obtained by contacting NFIE at 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Proposals for the grant programs are due April 1, 1991.

► "Just Do It: Stay in School" grants for dropout prevention projects, administered by NFIE and funded by NIKE.

► Hilda Maehling and William G. Carr Grants for teacher-led, student-centered classroom projects.

► Applications to attend the Christa McAuliffe Institute in Educational Pioneering 1991 Summer Conference, which focuses on using technology in the classroom, are due February 1, 1991.

NFIE has released the third in its series of dropout prevention publications. *A Blueprint for Success: Lessons Learned* shares lessons learned from the histories, major components, and guiding principles of the dropout prevention projects NFIE has funded since 1986.

To charge a copy of the booklet to a credit card, call 203-934-2669.

NEA Board OKs Funds Transfer

Under a policy set by the NEA Board of Directors in 1975, NEA must publish every rollcall vote of the Board. There was one such vote at the Oct. 5-6 Board meeting; the vote was unanimous. The Board voted to appropriate amounts from the 1990-91 Contingency Fund for state affiliates as follows:

► $350,000 to assist the Tennessee Education Association in its efforts to bring about economic and education reform in Tennessee;

► $150,000 for the purposes described below in order to assist the Louisiana Association of Educators (LAE) in overcoming financial and organizing difficulties.

a. To provide a special grant of $120,000 for the hiring of two organizers and one communications specialist to work in targeted membership recruitment areas.

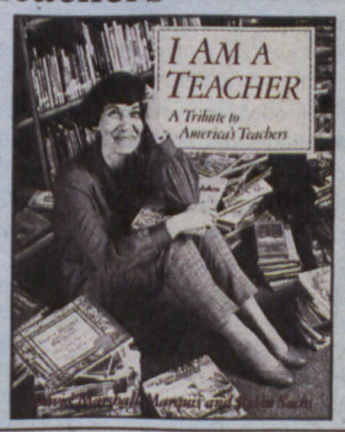
b. To provide a grant of up to $30,000 for LAE for the purpose of hiring an accountant to be in charge of its finances.

► $200,000 to assist the Oregon Education Association in its efforts to defeat Oregon Ballot Measure 5 (property tax limitation proposal).

152 Yes, 0 No, 1 Not voting. Absentee was Terrance L. Craney of Wisconsin, replaced by alternate Margaret Guertler.

For Teachers, About Teachers

David Marshall Marquis has just created a book that will make you proud to be in education: *I Am a Teacher: A Tribute to America's Teachers*. Marquis, a former Texas teacher and NEA member, wrote and performs a one-actor play by the same name. The book features portrait photographs of 78 outstanding teachers from across the country. The artist—no other term will do—is portrait journalist Robin Sachs of Dallas. The publisher is Simon & Schuster. The price is $29.95. A coupon on the book's jacket tells teachers how to get a $5 rebate.



About AIDS

Few materials are available for teaching young kids about HIV infection and AIDS, so Margaret Merrifield, a physician from Ontario, Canada, wrote her own.

Come Sit by Me is targeted toward children ages 4 to 8 years old. The book centers on Karen, a young girl whose school friend Nicholas has AIDS. The book comes with an information guide for children and educators on the facts about AIDS, including a pictorial chart on how you *can't* get AIDS. *Come Sit by Me* is $6.95 plus $1.50 postage and handling for the first book, $.75 for each additional book. Send your order to Women's Press, 517 College St., #233, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6G 4A2.

Looking Back

Something To Sing About In West Virginia

Craig Cunningham

Thousands of West Virginia school employees rallied at the state capitol last March. The result: major increases in school funds.

West Virginia Education Association members are proud and happy. Largely because of their collective efforts—including a statewide teacher strike in March—the West Virginia legislature met in a special session to address the problems of the state's schools.

The lawmakers dealt with chronic problems like low teacher salaries, a bankrupt retirement system, and a floundering state health program ("Rising Up," Sept.)—then went on to establish programs to improve the quality of education and give teachers a greater role in decision making.

Among the new law's 25 provisions, all now in effect:

► a $5,000 annual pay raise for every teacher, to be phased in over three years ($2,000 this year, $1,000 next year, and $2,000 the following year).

► an additional $1,000 annual raise for teachers holding a master's degree in their teaching field.

► a $1,088 annual raise for every school support employee.

► the creation in each school of a faculty senate composed of every professional staff member, including the principal.

► a classroom/research material allowance of $50 per year, plus an additional $150 for each teacher that will go into a central fund for each school, to be allocated by the faculty senate.

► the creation of a state center for professional advancement.

► the development and utilization of broadcasting courses for students, using satellite and fiber optics.

► the creation of a mentor teacher program for beginning teachers. (The mentors, chosen by faculty senates, will get $600 annual stipends.)

"This legislation demonstrates the effectiveness of an all-out campaign by WVEA to bring West Virginia schools into the 20th century," says WVEA President Kayetta Meadows. "The potential of this legislation is significant. Now it becomes our responsibility to see that it works."

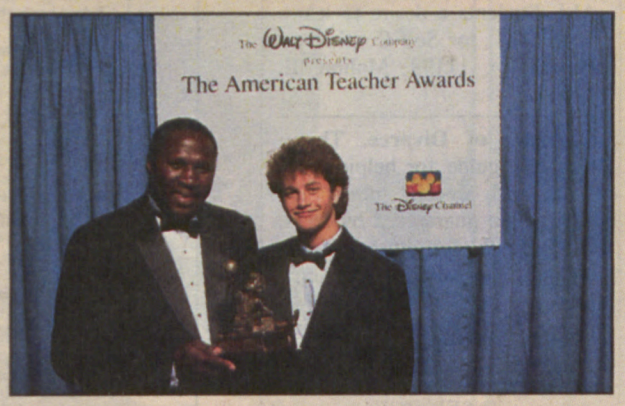
To celebrate the teacher gains, WVEA has produced a five-minute "feeling good" video for members, complete with scenes from the March strike. Background music for the video is "Picket Line Blues," composed by teacher member Al Chappell and performed by Chappell and fellow teacher members Johnny Prevento, Bary Bowman, and Keith Pennington.

Looking Way Back

Ten years ago, a headline in the *NEA Reporter* announced, "NEA welcomes support personnel into the family." The accompanying story reported on a conference at NEA Center that for the first time brought together school support staff from all parts of the nation.

The 1979 NEA Representative Assembly had proposed the changes in NEA's constitution that set the stage for organizing support workers. In 1980, RA delegates supported a constitutional amendment giving support personnel full NEA membership rights. Today NEA boasts nearly 180,000 ESP members.

Lulah Hedgeman receives her award from Oprah Winfrey.



Frank Thomas with Kirk Cameron.

Patricia Taylor with Edward James Olmos.

Teachers Star in Disney Awards

The evening air was full of excitement and anticipation. In tuxedos and formal gowns, an array of stars alighted from their limousines at Los Angeles' Pantages Theater.

Nothing unusual for Hollywood—except that this night the show was the Walt Disney Company's American Teacher Awards for Teaching Excellence ceremony, and the stars were 36 teacher semifinalists (Innovation, October). Among the award presenters were Hollywood stars Jon Voight, Edward James Olmos, Oprah Winfrey, and Kirk Cameron.

From the semifinalists, 12 finalists were selected, among them three NEA members: Lulah Hedgeman, a music teacher at Overton High School in Memphis, Tennessee; Patricia Taylor, a mathematics teacher at Meadowbrook High School in Richmond, Virginia; and Frank Thomas, a physical education teacher at Washington-Douglass Elementary School in Jackson, Tennessee. Each received $5,000.

All finalists were recommended by administrators and chosen by an independent Educational Steering Committee made up of representatives from NEA and other education organizations.

The two-hour gala will air on the Disney Channel December 1. (Check local schedules for repeat showings.) The special will feature film clips of the teachers and their students, plus celebrities.

In the Next Issue...

What can school employees do about the skyrocketing costs of health insurance premiums? What can the U.S. learn from other nations' health care systems? What is NEA doing on the national level to promote key health care legislation? For answers to these questions, plus a roundup of innovative local strategies to cut health care costs without reducing health care coverage, see the February issue of *NEA Today*.

Michael Peltz

Some traditional school plays have lost their popularity as new ones come on the scene.

Changing Scenes On the Stage

High school drama repertoires are changing, as plays from the 1980s edge out former favorites ("From *Our Town* to *Grease*," March). Current favorites, according to *U.S. News and World Report*:

► *Little Shop of Horrors*
► *Voices from the High School*
► *The Nerd*
► *Fools*
► *Brighton Beach Memoirs*
► *Snoopy*
► *The Foreigner.*

Education Marketplace

EMPLOYMENT

National job network for teachers. Call or write NTC, P.O. Box 1257, Boston, MA 02118–1257; 617–267–3204.

Live in Japan. Individuals with a master's degree interested in teaching English for one year in Japan should send resume to: International Education Services, Shin Taiso Bldg., 10-7 Dogenzaka 2-chome Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Free Issue of Early Childhood News—the magazine written for child care professionals. Call 1–800–543–4383 or write to: T&L, Dept. 5001, 2451 E. River Rd., Dayton, OH 45439.

Free issue of Technology & Learning (formerly Classroom Computer Learning). Stay on top of the ever changing field. Call 1-800-543-4383 or write to: T&L, Dept. 5001, 2451 E. River Rd., Dayton, OH 45439.

CONFERENCES

Feb. 11–13--Training Conf. on Teaching Youth Entrepreneurship. Trump Hotel/Cas. in Atl. Cty. For info 609–342–8277. Workbooks incl. in pkg.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS

"OUR PEOPLE'S HERITAGE" POSTER

To deal with the issues they will face as adults, today's students need to understand how America has grown and changed.

To help them, the US Army and Army Reserve have created a rich and colorful teaching poster, "Our People's Heritage," that celebrates the bicentennial of the US Census.

This unique educational package explores the important demographic changes in America while involving students with challenging exercises.

Copies of "Our People's Heritage" were mailed to high school principals early this fall. For a copy, contact your principal or local Army Recruiter.

TIRED OF: • being taken advantage of • nagging your students • cleaning up after them ...? **Get a "NOT MOM" Button!** It's FUN! Just, "Pin, Point, and Smile." The message is clear, *"you're their TEACHER, not their MOTHER!"*

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The 7-Ability Plan. Book on plan for instant student self-confidence by testing & grading 6 other abilities. Result: New self-concept and a focus, giving ALL Students a desire to learn. Send $11 to Self-Confidence Press, Box 11199, Moline, IL 61265.

Children of Divorce. This teacher's guide for helping students with special needs is satisfaction guaranteed by NEA. Send $6.95 for stock #0246–6–00–FC to NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516.

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Get FREE information about this dynamic new videotape: *The TransParent School Model,* by Jerold P. Bauch of Vanderbilt University.

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To place an Education Marketplace advertisement... Just send in your notice, with appropriate payment, to Education Marketplace. The Rates: Educational Products/Services and Academic Employment Opportunities Categories: $95 per line. Display ads—$750 per column inch; 5 inch maximum. Consumer Products/Services, Summer Employment, and Business Opportunities Categories: $110 per line. Display ads—$975 per column inch; 5 inch maximum. Please count 35 characters per line (including spaces and punctuation) for line ads; 3 line minimum.

For more information, contact NEA Today Education Marketplace, 1201 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036; (301) 593-1636.

PROTECTING YOU FROM LIABILITY

As an NEA member, you're insured against loss of up to $1 million per member per occurrence, subject to a limit of $3 million per occurrence, if you're ever sued in connection with your work. NEA's liability program offers these coverages: civil negligence, $1,000,000; civil rights violation, $250,000; criminal charge (if exonerated), $25,000 for attorneys' fees; bail bond, $1,000; property damage, $250.

NEA Educators Employment Liability Program Summary Plan Description

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this summary is to inform NEA members about the structure and principal provisions of the 1990-91 NEA Educators Employment Liability Program, referred to as the "EEL Program." Please remember that this is only a summary. If there is any conflict or inconsistency between this summary and the underlying contracts and documents, the contracts and documents must be controlling.

The "EEL Program" is an insurance plan designed to protect you, as an NEA member, against financial liabilities incurred as a result of certain kinds of accidents occurring in the course of your employment, including certain costs of providing a legal defense to you for claims against you.

The Program is administered by NEA and its state affiliates and is underwritten by the Horace Mann Insurance Company. The entire premium for the plan is paid by NEA.

This summary is being furnished in compliance with the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). As participants in the EEL Program, you are entitled to certain rights and protections under ERISA. These rights are summarized in Part VIII of this summary.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

PLAN NAME/SPONSOR: The Plan is generally known as the NEA Educators Employment Liability Program ("EEL Program"), and is sponsored for NEA members by the National Education Association of the United States (NEA), 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

TYPE OF PLAN/IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS: The EEL Program is a welfare plan providing accident liability insurance and reimbursement for attorney fees and court costs. NEA has been assigned identification number 530115260 by the Internal Revenue Service. NEA has assigned NUMBER 523 to this Plan.

ADMINISTRATION/PLAN ADMINISTRATOR: The EEL Program is administered by NEA pursuant to resolutions adopted by its Board of Directors and Executive Committee and pursuant to agreements between Horace Mann and NEA. Communications concerning any aspect of the Program should be addressed to Educators Employment Liability Program, c/o NEA Legal Services, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. The telephone number is (202) 822-7080.

SERVICE OF PROCESS: If legal action involving the Program is necessary, legal process may be served upon the Plan Administrator. The agent for service of legal process is Lynn Ohman, c/o NEA Legal Services, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

TRUSTEES/COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT: Since all assets of the Program consist of insurance contracts and funds held by a licensed insurance company, there is no trust under the Program and there are no trustees. In addition, the EEL Program has not been established and is not being maintained pursuant to the terms of any collective bargaining agreement with any employer.

III. ELIGIBILITY

MEMBERS: All active, life, educational support, substitute, retired life, and student NEA members are automatically covered by the EEL Program.

IV. COVERAGE

ACCIDENT LIABILITY: Under the EEL Program, you are entitled to reimbursement for damages, up to a maximum of $1,000,000 per member per occurrence, subject to a limit of $3,000,000 per occurrence, and legal expenses incurred to defend you, as a result of certain "accidents" which occur in the course of your employment. An "accident" is an act which inflicts damages to someone other than yourself. The phrase "course of employment" means while you are engaged in activity which was undertaken pursuant to the terms of the employment contract or at the request or approval of your supervisor. (Coverage A)

EXCLUSIONS: You are **not** covered if the suit against you is—

- brought by another employee of an educational unit with certain exceptions;
- based upon liability which you have expressly assumed under any contract or agreement;
- seeking solely declaratory, injunctive, and/or similar nonmonetary relief;
- alleging any violation of the criminal law, except civil damages arising out of your use of corporal punishment.

Certain activities are also excluded from coverage under the EEL Program, such as:

- rendering of medical or similar services except by licensed school nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, psychological therapists or on an emergency basis by nonmedically certificated members;
- a publication or utterance of defamatory statements;
- ownership, maintenance, operation, use, loading, or unloading of any vehicles **except**:

1) driver training instructors who are riding as passengers in the course of their work;

2) vocational education instructors engaged in teaching shop; and

3) members supervising students entering or exiting a school bus.

- misuse of public and/or private funds;
- sale of food products or other gods manufactured by or under your supervision—except for home economics teachers and cafeteria workers, who are covered;
- use of firearms, except when physically restraining a student who is threatening others with firearms.

These are the major exclusions under this Program. Please consult the certificate of insurance for further details.

LEGAL AND DEFENSE FEES: You will be reimbursed for the following:

- Up to a maximum of $25,000 per occurrence for attorney fees and expenses incurred in the defense of any criminal proceeding arising out of your employment except if the proceeding arises out of an action against another employee. Unless the proceeding results from your use of corporal punishment, you must be exonerated in order to receive reimbursement. (Coverage B)
- Up to $1,000 for bail bond premium as the result of an event occurring during your employment. (Coverage C)

ASSAULT-RELATED PERSONAL PROPERTY DAMAGE: You will be paid up to $250 for the damage or destruction of your own property or property in your custody if you are assaulted at school or while engaged in an authorized school activity. Such damages must exceed coverage provided by any homeowner's policy, and there will be no coverage for damage or destruction of a vehicle of any kind or for any property owned, leased or rented by an educational unit. (Coverage D)

V. TERMINATION OF COVERAGE

Coverage under the EEL Program will be terminated or reduced under the following circumstances: if you cease to be an NEA member, or if NEA decides to discontinue the EEL Program as a whole. Termination will not affect amounts due for claims arising prior to termination.

VI. CONTRIBUTIONS

SOURCE/AMOUNT/MEDIUM: NEA pays the entire cost of the EEL Program. The amount is determined by the NEA and the insurance company.

This is an unfunded welfare plan. All contributions made by NEA are applied to pay the premium on the insurance policy issued by Horace Mann.

PLAN YEAR: The Program's fiscal records are maintained on the basis of an accounting year which ends on August 31 of each calendar year.

VII. CLAIMS

INITIAL PROCEDURES: If there is a claim for any benefits under the Program, you are to contact your state association's EEL coordinator within a reasonable time period and provide a copy of any and all relevant legal documents and a summary of the incident. The state EEL coordinator will thereupon forward to you the appropriate forms to fill out.

If unable to contact your state association's EEL coordinator, send a copy of all legal documents and the description of the events directly to Horace Mann Insurance Company, One Horace Mann Plaza, Springfield, IL 62715.

REVIEW OF DENIED CLAIMS: If you or any other person making a claim under the Program and NEA or the insurance company do not agree that benefits are payable, or do not agree as to the amount of the benefits payable, you should clearly state your objection(s) in a letter to NEA within sixty (60) days of the event. Write to Lynn Ohman, Director, NEA Legal Services, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

VIII. YOUR RIGHTS UNDER ERISA

As a participant in the EEL Program, you are entitled to certain rights and protections under ERISA, as follows:

- You have the right to examine, without charge, at the offices of NEA Legal Services, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036, all Program documents, including the insurance contract (with riders and amendments) with Horace Mann and the pertinent resolutions adopted by the NEA Board of Directors and Executive Committee for the administration of the Program. You may also examine, without charge, copies of all documents pertaining to the Program filed by NEA with the U.S. Department of Labor, such as detailed annual reports and plan descriptions.
- You have the right to obtain copies of all Program documents and other Program information upon written request to NEA Legal Services at the above address. NEA Legal Services may make a reasonable charge for the copies.
- You are entitled to summary financial reports for the year ending August 31, 1991, when they become available.

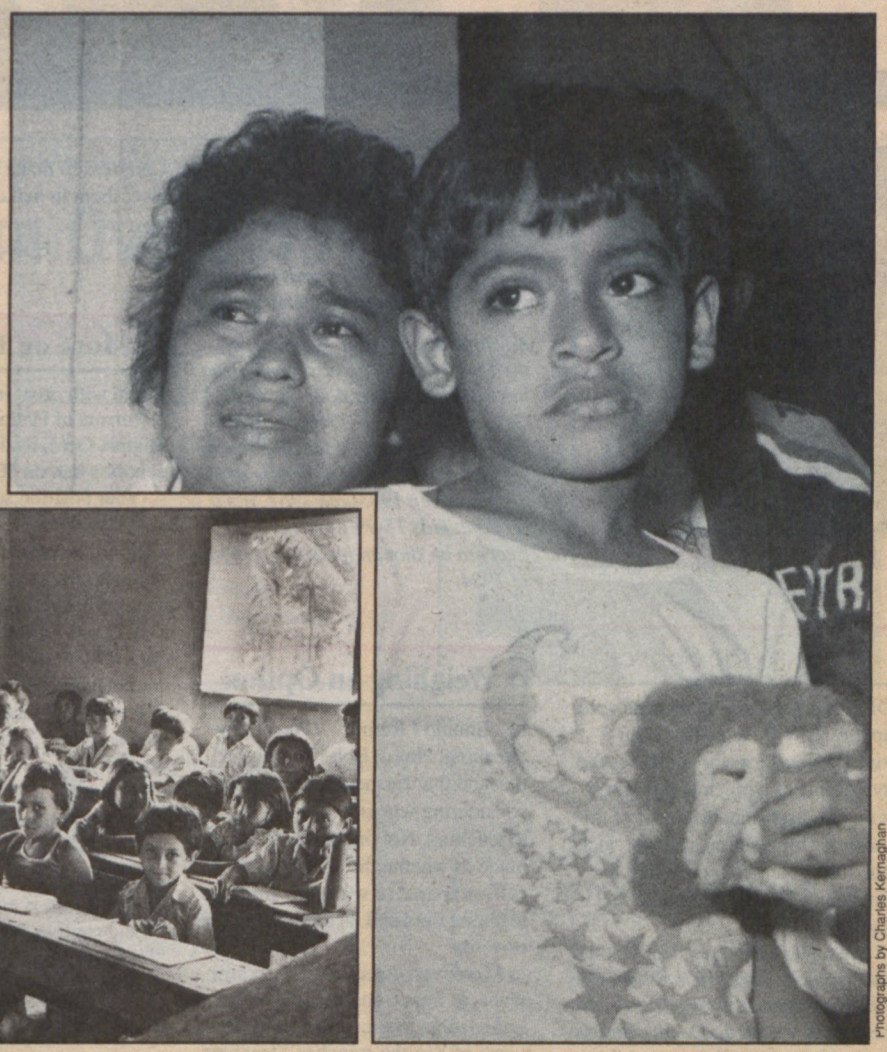
In addition to creating rights for you, ERISA imposes duties on NEA and Horace Mann in its operation of the EEL Program. NEA is a "fiduciary." It has a duty to operate the Program prudently and in your interest. No one can prevent you from obtaining the insurance benefits to which you are properly entitled under the Program or from exercising your rights under ERISA. If your claim for a benefit is denied in whole or in part, you must receive a written explanation from Horace Mann for the denial. You have the right to have Horace Mann review and reconsider your claims. Under ERISA, there are steps you can take to enforce your rights. For instance, if you request Program materials to which you are entitled under ERISA and do not receive them within 30 days, you may file suit in federal court. In such a case, the court may require NEA to provide the materials and pay you up to $100 a day until you receive the materials unless the materials were not sent because of reasons beyond NEA's control. If you have a claim for benefits which is denied or ignored, in whole or in part, you may file suit in a state or federal court. If it should happen that Program fiduciaries misuse the Program's money, or if you are discriminated against for asserting your rights, you may seek assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor, or file suit in federal court. The court will decide who will pay court costs and legal fees. If you are successful, the court may order the person you have sued to pay these costs and fees. If you lose, the court may order you to pay these costs and fees, for example, if it finds your claim frivolous. If you have any questions about the EEL Program, contact NEA Legal Services. If you have any questions about this statement or about your rights under ERISA, contact the nearest Area Office of the U.S. Labor Management Services Administration, Department of Labor.

INTERNATIONAL

IN EL SALVADOR

ANGER and FEAR

After a decade of massive U.S. aid—over $4 billion in all—the government of El Salvador still can't educate children or stop death squads from 'disappearing' their teachers. What can you do to help stop the western hemisphere's bloodiest war? For starters, think twice before you drink your next cup of coffee.



Photographs by Charles Kernaghan

All-too-familiar scenes in El Salvador: Above, a young child and his aunt in shock moments after Salvadoran National Guardsmen staged a middle-of-the-night raid to arrest the child's father and mother. The father, a union leader named Ricardo Lazo, was beaten in custody, threatened with death, and only released after an NEA-backed national committee of U.S. labor leaders telegrammed protests to the Salvadoran government. Below, a typical classroom in El Salvador's rural communities. Salvadoran classrooms lack almost all the basic essentials for learning.

Virginia Ryder teaches at West Potomac High School in Fairfax County, Virginia. This past summer, she decided to go see her tax dollars at work—in El Salvador, the Central American nation that's received over $4 billion U.S. tax dollars over the past 10 years.

Ryder didn't like what she saw.

"Daily life for a Salvadoran family is one long struggle to survive," she says. "Household water has to be fetched from a public spigot. Health care is non-existent. Just getting enough to eat is a job for entire families. It's no wonder so few kids attend school."

Where have all those U.S. tax dollars gone? Most have gone to the Salvadoran military, a notoriously corrupt war machine that has been charged repeatedly with torturing and murdering civilian critics of the Salvadoran status quo.

The most grisly murders came last fall, when six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her 15-year-old daughter were slain by Salvadoran soldiers. No one has yet been brought to justice.

In fact, no Salvadoran military officer has ever been convicted for abusing human rights.

In October, the U.S. Congress finally said enough. Both the House and Senate voted to withhold 50 percent of U.S. military aid to El Salvador.

Congress hopes the cutback will encourage the Salvadoran government to negotiate an end to El Salvador's ongoing civil war.

These negotiations, mediated by the United Nations, have so far stalled over the issue of the Salvadoran government's refusal to purge the military of its most notorious human rights violators.

Will the withholding of U.S. military aid force serious negotiations? Not immediately. Salvadoran military officials say they already have enough U.S. military aid to last them another year.

Virginia Ryder and her four NEA colleagues, Winnie Porter, Sarah Damon, Martha McFerran, and Kathleen Boucher, who visited El Salvador this past summer say El Salvador's students and teachers shouldn't have to face another year of war and repression.

"We all concluded," says Martha McFerran, an eighth grade Spanish and history teacher from Columbus, Ohio, "that the Salvadoran government, instead of upgrading basic human necessities, is waging war against its own people."

"We spoke with teachers who had been imprisoned and tortured for their efforts to improve education and stop human rights abuses," adds Denver teacher Kathleen Boucher. "And students are conscripted into the army against their will."

Boucher and her colleagues are backing a new grassroots boycott campaign aimed at getting the Salvadoran government serious about negotiating. The centerpiece of this campaign: a U.S. consumer boycott of Folger's coffee.

Why a coffee boycott? Coffee exports currently bring the Salvadoran government more than $300 million a year.

That revenue makes coffee second only to U.S. aid as a prime source of cash for the Salvadoran military machine.

Coffee is also the mainstay of the oligarchy that has dominated El Salvador for generations. The current Salvadoran president, Alfredo Cristiani, is the son of one wealthy coffee-grower and is married to the daughter of another.

A successful coffee boycott, note boycott leaders, would slash revenue for the Salvadoran military and encourage the coffee-growing oligarchy to see the wisdom of serious peace negotiations.

Why boycott Folger's? Folger's is the largest-selling U.S. brand of coffee that uses Salvadoran coffee beans.

Last July, in Kansas City, the over 8,000 delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly voted to endorse the coffee boycott effort. The campaign has also won support from a host of other national organizations, ranging from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to the United Farm Workers.

The boycott effort, says teacher Virginia Ryder, is long overdue.

"The Salvadoran government," says Ryder, "must be held responsible for ignoring human needs and ignoring suffering. We need to relentlessly demand what every child deserves and most civilized countries respect: quality education for all."

—Sam Pizzigati

Resources

For more information about education in El Salvador, contact the Network of Educators' Committees on Central America, 1118 22nd St., N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

Labor Action, the newsletter of the Labor Coalition on Central America, is the best source of information on labor-related coffee boycott efforts. For a $10 annual subscription, write to Labor Action, P.O. Box 28014, Oakland, CA 94604.

NEA MEMBERS REACH OUT

Last summer, as a delegate to the convention of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession, NEA member Art Kindler of Arizona met some Salvadoran teachers. He was shocked at what they told him.

"Some Salvadorans are living in shanties made from cardboard boxes," says Kindler. "Thousands have been dislocated by the war, many to areas without electricity, running water, sewers, or health care."

Massachusetts Teachers Association Vice President Bob Murphy also met with Salvadoran delegates to the WCOTP meeting. Three of them told him they'd recently been detained and tortured. One described being taken from her home by 50 police, tortured and asked to name her union's leaders, and finally released after eight days.

Many MTA members regularly send protests when Salvadoran teachers are picked up, says Murphy: "The Salvadorans say it makes the difference between getting released and just never showing up again."

Rolling Terrace Elementary School in Maryland has adopted a Salvadoran school. Last spring the kids (many of them Salvadoran) decided to send down the profits from their store—about $1,000. The sister school, located in El Salvador's capital, will use the money to build latrines.

—Jane Power

Letters

Get to the Source

Discussing ways to overcome voter apathy ("Will Democracy Survive?" Nov.) merely addresses the symptoms of a much greater problem: the disenfranchisement of the masses. Our election system "locks out" the voter from choosing the President. Thus most people feel it's useless to vote.

We never get a President who is the people's choice. It's simply one rich man against another rich man, neither of whom the people choose.

So please lay off the people's apathy. Work on getting a system we can feel a part of, and we will vote.

From a disenfranchised teacher of 31 years who has always worked, paid taxes, and voted.

Roger Brown
APO San Francisco

Guns and Safety

"Putting Guns on Safety" (Washington Watch, Nov.) was confusing and misleading. Where did the murder statistic for the 15-19 age group come from? The 1989 Almanac with the latest crime statistics furnished by the FBI indicates that firearm-related crime decreased from 1983 to 1987.

What has changed since 1984 that would warrant an increase in murders, as indicated by your article? If anything, I believe the biggest change is that firearms laws are more numerous and restrictive today than they were in 1984. This does not back up the NEA/Handgun Control, Inc. stand of more laws equal less crime.

I believe that if you check the facts, you will find that the cities and states with the highest crime rates have the most stringent firearms laws. Washington, D.C. is a perfect example. Are the residents of Washington safer now than they were prior to the adoption of the most prohibitive and stringent firearm law in the nation?

Reference is made in your column to the NRA not being responsive to the views of its membership. I can't speak for the NRA, only for myself. NEA isn't reflecting my views in matters of firearms legislation.

I have informed my representatives that I feel S. 1970 and H.R. 4225 are bad pieces of legislation, and that the NEA doesn't express my views on the issue.

Richard Armagost
Three Springs, Pennsylvania

Ed Note: The murder statistics for the 15-19 age group also came from the FBI, in a report done by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Whatever the trend may be for all firearm-related crime involving people of all ages between 1983 and 1987, it's a fact that kids 15-19 were twice as likely to be shot and killed in 1989 as in 1984.

Weighing an Option

In "Should I Retire?" (Personally Speaking, Nov.), Bob Ely weighed this and that financial option when considering whether to say "finis" to teaching. Not one mention was made of whether he was psychologically prepared to withdraw from the teaching field and its implicit psychic rewards.

Moreover, does Bob feel he still wants to impart his wisdom and knowledge, the accretion of his 30 years of "in-the-trenches" teaching, to the citizens of tomorrow? If negatory, then by all means he should step aside and let someone else do the job—someone who has the requisite fire in the belly to do it.

If he's just going to paste green stamps in a book for retirement credit, then I say, "Bye, bye, Bob."

Joan Mary Macey
Binghamton, New York

PAC Talk

In your October issue, you advocate the continuation of PACs (Washington Watch, Oct.) as a way to increase democratic participation. I take exception with this point.

PACs have led to abuses such as the savings and loan scandal which will cost us all billions of dollars. The S&L PACs made sure that key senators and representatives received enough money to keep them from investigating their precarious situation.

You state that PACs allow people to have a big role in the legislative process. The point you miss is that as long as legislators are dependent on fund raising, they will tend to do the bidding of those they are dependent on for funds. What's needed, and what some brave congressmen are pushing for, is public funding of all elections.

The NEA should be in the forefront of this movement, since national priorities have been skewed by the pressure on Congress to raise money. Instead of trying to get our own voice heard among the 4,000 PACs and various millionaires contributing to Congress, we should be advocating federal funding for Congressional elections and allowing Congress to make the decisions we elect them to make.

Jonathan Sass
Holyoke, Massachusetts

More on Halloween

I read with great interest the article "Horrors of Halloween" (Human Rights, Oct.), dealing with one school's ban on Halloween.

Your position seems to be that this was unacceptable because "an element in the community" took the schools "captive," making decisions that are "rightfully ours."

If this is "an attack on education," then why must I, who do not celebrate Halloween, be obliged to report for work and take part in the parties and activities? It violates my religious freedoms.

However, if I were to silently display religious decorations at Christmas, that would be "inappropriate."

In short, it is acceptable to be "held captive," but only if the "element" is blatantly anti-fundamental.

Roxie Martin
Sand Springs, Oklahoma

To my surprise, the NEA seems to be rather unconcerned over the issue of satanism in the schools ("The Horrors of Halloween," Oct.). In recent years, Satan worship and occult practice have been linked to hundreds of suicides and bizarre behavior in teens.

As a parent and teaching assistant, I would praise rather than criticize any group willing to help the school eradicate cult activities.

Holly Gilbert
Warsaw, New York

Feeling Put Upon

I feel the NEA needs to do something about the discrimination that experienced teachers or teachers with a lot of graduate hours receive when applying for a job.

Most everyone knows that school districts hire the least experienced qualified teacher available. The teacher with 10 or more years rarely stands a chance. Teachers with years of experience and graduate hours are doomed before they begin.

This problem makes it very difficult for a teacher who wants to relocate, whether it be within the state or in another state. If teachers need to relocate because of some problems within the family or with their health, what do they do if they can't get hired?

Every occupation wants experience, but in education experience becomes a huge handicap because school districts want to keep their budgets down. This practice is unfair and difficult to prove, but, at the same time, we know it goes on.

Timothy Garasha
Conover, Wisconsin

College for All?

Mabel C. Williams writes that all high school graduates should go to college, "so they could be exposed to the world of ideas, to philosophies rooted in traditional and reasoned thought" (Debate, Oct.). I find that totally absurd.

The major problem with our colleges and universities now, in my view, is that too many students are there with absolutely no goals and no ideas for satisfactorily completing their undergraduate studies. They will do enough just to get by.

A thorough high school education, coupled with some vocational-technical school training, supported by community college liberal arts, would suffice for many students. If students reject responsibilities at the high school level, chances are slim they will accept university responsibilities.

I am convinced that we must all strive for a more responsible high school environment, so that all our students can be more trainable in their strongest abilities, be they professional or nonprofessional.

Steve Linta
Beaver, Pennsylvania

Education President?

Our "Education President" is finally contributing to the education of Americans. Just look what he is doing for two facets of education: geography and history.

At the moment, our President is pouring billions of dollars into a project that educates Americans on the location of Kuwait, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. Some of us may have thought that those political entities were somewhere in the South Pacific.

As for history, he's correcting a long-held view perpetuated by crazy Democrats that Republicans are, or were at some time, isolationists.

Richard D. Rowley
Bellaire, Michigan

Pencil Point

"Making the Point with Pencils" (Trends, Oct.) states that some pencil manufacturers are pledging not to use rain-forest wood in their product.

I would very much like to see you write a few words about the low quality pencils that come from China! But please lower the boom on all the plastic pencil manufacturers in the world. Plastic pencils ruin the pencil sharpeners, and when the students bend them, the lead breaks, and the pencil will never sharpen.

And the small pieces of broken lead also get stuck in the end of the pencil sharpener, so other pencils will not sharpen.

I do hope you will look into this problem. It may be only a small thing, but millions of students are faced with it daily.

Bud Earl
Dalles, Oregon

Athletic Overkill

That was an excellent article about the teacher fired for refusing to change an athlete's grade (Sounding Board, Oct.). Texas isn't the only place with such problems.

I've never heard of "point borrowing" in my district. Actually, the coaches we have are very cooperative with the teachers and try to help if their team members are not doing well. They speak to the student and encourage him/her to work harder.

However, there is a larger problem. Athletes are continually missing academic classes for practice or games. I suggested to my principal that no athlete should miss a class for a game. He said that we could not be the only school to insist upon that, for the state league regulates when and where games are played.

We need a statewide or even a national policy that states that athletes will not miss school because of games or practice.

Ernest A. Avellar
Hayward, California

The Other Side

It's always disconcerting when operations don't go exactly as planned.

Mr. Larry Wolkin wrote (Letters, Oct.) of a problem he encountered in redeeming his Trumpet Club bonus points for a VCR. Regrettably, there was a lapse in our fulfillment operation. We fully acknowledge this and apologize to Mr. Wolkin and his class.

Please know that Mr. Wolkin did receive his VCR in August, and has acknowledged its receipt to us. In fact it was shipped to him before we knew of his letter.

Nevertheless, Mr. Wolkin did encounter a real difficulty with our bonus point redemption program. And that is not how we normally do business.

The Trumpet Club's commitment to teachers and students is second to none. With our rapid growth, however, our computerized fulfillment program has been a little slow in keeping up with our customer care requirements. The problem has now been rectified.

We wish to assure all educators that the Trumpet Club not only offers high quality books at excellent prices, but that we are committed to complete customer satisfaction.

Judy Newman
Vice President and Director
The Trumpet Club
New York, New York

Address correspondence to "Letters," NEA Today, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. We reserve the right to edit letters for length.

Debate

YES

John Cary

Is Self-Esteem Oversold?

NO

Steven Rotsch

Roger Green, a language arts teacher at Mossville Elementary School in Chillicothe, Illinois, is president of the Illinois Valley Central Education Association. A 28-year veteran, Green directs his school's extra-curricular speech program and is sponsor of the school newspaper.

Lynn Larson, also a 28-year veteran, teaches sociology at Traverse City (Michigan) Area High School. She presents workshops on self-esteem and student leadership for both the Michigan Education Association and the Michigan Department of Education.

The self-esteem bandwagon is diverting much-needed resources of money and energy as it makes its merry way to the front of the innovation parade. After the parade is over, what'll we have to show for it?

Sure, we want our students to feel good about themselves. Goodness knows, as teachers we've had bushels of put-down experiences of our own from those who have been placed in positions above us. We know very well that all of us work harder and probably perform better when someone takes the time to expose our good points.

So shouldn't we be tickled silly to witness a major emphasis on building positive self-esteem in education today? On the surface, it's an extremely attractive proposition.

The problem is that states and communities are spending far too much time and money forming self-esteem task forces, hiring self-esteem consultants, buying expensive self-esteem literature, viewing high-tech self-esteem programs, and holding self-esteem conferences.

Some schools have become so infatuated with the "new idea" that they're actually spending valuable learning time "teaching" self-esteem. Why?

Are teachers in these school systems failing to reinforce good performances as a matter of routine and common sense?

Are these school systems so academically advanced that they can afford to cut into time spent on the basics?

Are students of today so different from the students of yesterday that they require such a costly special program?

I maintain that the answer to each of these questions is No! These school systems are simply guilty of joining the parade in order to gain the admiration of an innovation-starved public.

The self-esteem mania sweeping the country doesn't just grab resources—a greater and more costly danger is emerging. A generation of youngsters is growing up with the notion that everything they do is good, whether it actually is or not.

When students don't perform up to standard, we don't serve them well by trying to make them feel the deficiency is somehow acceptable. They'd be far better off if we explained their failures so they could keep from making the same errors on the next attempt.

I once knew a teacher who empha-sized self-esteem long before it gained its present popularity. She believed—perhaps still does—that her students should be told they were successful in everything they did.

When one of her former students came into my class, she missed 15 of the 20 words on each of the first four spelling tests of the year. After the fourth test, I checked her record from the previous year.

My curiosity mushroomed when I found straight *A*'s in spelling for the entire year. Upon questioning, the girl told me that the previous year she'd only had to learn how to spell five words of her choosing each week. She had thought that still was all she needed to do.

Once I set her straight, she didn't miss a single spelling word the rest of the year. She may indeed have felt good about learning five words a week, but there's no telling what a greater expectation from her former teacher would have done for her self-esteem—not to mention her academic achievement.

That's the kind of thing that will happen if educators jump blindly and unreservedly onto the self-esteem bandwagon. We will arrive at the "ignorance is bliss" stage of development. What a revolting prospect.

Don't get me wrong—positive self-esteem is a worthwhile goal for all our students. But let teachers simply do what teachers have always done—teach the children. Positive self-esteem has resulted, and will continue to result, from the natural emphasis on doing one's work well.

The alternative—spending vast sums of money and energy on task forces, conferences, literature, consultants, and high-tech programs—is intolerably wasteful.

I want to make students feel better about themselves when they leave my class than they did when the semester began.

That's the first goal I always list when, once every three years, I must state my goals as part of the contractual evaluation process.

Several years ago, an evaluator said to me, "I've never had another teacher list this goal—I like it!" Her comment surprised me. Perhaps few teachers list such an idea as their first goal, but how can a teacher not list it at all?

Humans are fragile creatures whose egos need stroking and bolstering. Dignity and respect for one another need to be the rule, not the exception.

Given our fragmented, alienated, and fragile society—reflected in the faces and behaviors of our students—we as educators must be concerned with restoring respect for others and encouraging the development of self-worth.

Self-worth, or self-esteem, is a belief in the inherent goodness of one's self. A healthy ego allows students the freedom to say no to drugs, alcohol, and sex; to say yes to completing that term paper, getting home on time, or being kind to a classmate when others are being cruel. Students with a positive concept of themselves have a good relationship with the world around them.

Students who don't feel good about themselves—and I see more of them each year—suffer from an impaired ability to concentrate on academic issues and classroom materials. In other words, low self-esteem may create learning and/or behavioral problems.

So, like it or not, we must teach to the whole child. We must try to get children into a learning mode—at least during the time we have contact with them. That means making students feel valuable and comfortable in our classrooms.

At the beginning of each semester I hand out a sheet headed, "Promises and Expectations." In this two-page handout, I list 12 things students can expect from me. For example, I will learn all names in two weeks, I will treat each person with dignity and respect, I will maintain a good sense of humor...and so on.

My expectations for the students are three: They will practice rational rather than emotional thinking, writing, and speaking skills; they will come to class prepared and ready to learn; and they will be polite and respect others.

In my classroom we focus on the positive while being aware of areas that can be improved. No one is ever belittled—sensitive or timid students can be crushed and stifled by criticism.

I don't ignore any comment, even if it's wrong. Instead, I try to give "help" statements and encouragement that allow the student involved to feel free to try again another time.

About midway into the first nine weeks of my course, we do a "warm fuzzy" exercise. The class passes around a sheet of paper for each student. Everyone writes something good about each classmate. Nothing negative is permitted.

At the end of the class, each student selects a favorite comment and shares it with the others. On this day particularly, students leave my classroom beaming.

Teachers who work hard to nurture the whole student find that there are fewer discipline problems in their classrooms. When a problem does arise, they let the children involved know that it's the behavior, not the person, that's inappropriate. A belief in the unconditional worth of each student guides their teaching and discipline procedures.

Does all this work? Is self-esteem increased? My feedback says yes. I have relatively few discipline or attendance problems, and students tell me years later how much my class meant to them.

Students with confidence and self-worth constitute a key ingredient for a successful class. Providing an atmosphere where students feel good about themselves and one another takes us a long way toward reaching the academic goals we all wish to achieve.

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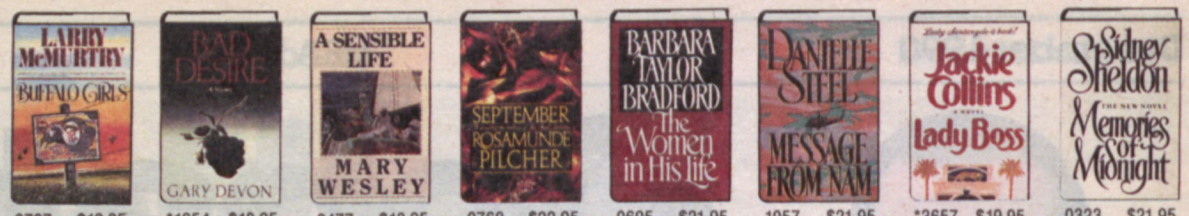

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